James D. Ewing

Battle of Flodden Field – 15-13

'Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!'
(Page 212)

SIR WALTER SCOTT

MARMION

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

EBENEZER CHARLTON BLACK, LL.D.

Alas! that Scottish Maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish Bard should wake the string,
The triumph of our foes to tell! — LEYDEN

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TO

Sir William Joseph Noble, Baronet

OF KIRKLEY HALL, NORTHUMBERLAND

WHO MAINTAINED THE TRADITIONS OF TILL AND TYNE SO WORTHILY THROUGH THE GREAT WAR THAT HE WAS HONOURED OF HIS KING AND COUNTRY, THIS EDITION OF *MARMION* IS DEDICATED, FOR HIS OWN SAKE AND THAT OF HIS UNCLE, WILLIAM BLACK, OF HEDWORTH HALL, THE EDITOR'S DEAR COUSIN OF ROMANTIC MEMORY

PREFACE

As in the case of his editions of *The Lady of the Lake*, already published by Ginn and Company, and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, now in preparation, the editor in the Introductions has made use of his lectures on English Poets from Chaucer to Tennyson, originally delivered before Harvard University in 1892–1893 on the invitation of President C. W. Eliot and Dr. F. J. Child. In these lectures were given to the world for the first time illuminating facts regarding Scott's ancestry and early environment, facts that are accepted everywhere today as part of the Scott biography.

Notes on the text of this edition will be found on page 246, along with a selection from the many significant changes which Scott made on the original manuscript of the poem.

The editor has restored to the title-page what was so prominent in all the original editions—a stanza from the *Ode on Visiting Flodden* by Scott's friend, Dr. John Leyden (see page xxx; also page 195, line 143), a famous Orientalist in his day and the author of *Scenes of Infancy*, a poem based on border scenes and legends.

The illustrations in this edition of *Marmion* are by Charles E. Brock, the London artist so well known for his drawings in *Punch* and interpretative studies of *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Essays of Elia*, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Beautiful in themselves, these pictures of scenes in *Marmion* are absolutely faithful to history and archæology.

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INTRODUCTION

I. BIOGRAPHICAL

Burns and Scott

It has been said that Lowland Scotland as a distinct nationality came in with two warriors and went out with two bards. It came in with William Wallace and Robert Bruce and went out with Robert Burns and Walter Scott. The first two made the history, the last two sang the song and told the story. What Burns did for the literature of Scotland and for English literature generally may be easily summed up. He it was who, uniting emotional fervor with intense patriotism, and drawing his inspiration from the depths of sentiment in the Scottish people, revealed what a Scottish writer could do by trusting to the whole wealth of Scottish resources. He awakened in Scotland a special literary energy—an energy that has the stamp of national character with a dash of national eccentricity, and that burst forth in Scott, Campbell, Wilson, Carlyle, and continued to the close of the nineteenth century in the best work of Robert Louis Stevenson and James Matthew Barrie.

There is a poetry in coincidences; and literary history has nothing more interesting in its records than what it has to tell us of the meetings, accidental or arranged, of those who hand down the torch of light and truth from generation to generation. Who can fail to be impressed by the visit paid by the precocious twelve-year-old elf, Alexander Pope, to the re-

nowned and aged Dryden, "glorious John," in his great arm-chair by the fire in Will's Coffee-house, a visit that links on the days of Milton and the Elizabethans to the time of the Queen Anne wits and the eighteenth century generally. That foregathering, to use an old Northern word, between the old and the new, the age before and that which followed, meant much to Pope and it meant much to literature. Not less interesting and not less important is the literary ordination, as Robert Chambers called it, of Walter Scott by Robert Burns. This story was a great favorite with Carlyle and is given here as it was told by Gillies and David Masson.

It was in the winter of 1786–1787 that Burns abandoned his extraordinary project of emigrating to the West Indies and paid his memorable visit to Edinburgh, invited thither by Dr. Blacklock who had fallen in with a copy of the *Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, published at Kilmarnock. During that winter, Burns, then in his twenty-ninth year, was the lion of Edinburgh society. Lord Monboddo, Dugald Stewart, Harry Erskine, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Hugh Blair, Henry Mackenzie, Dr. Gregory, Professor Black, Dr. Adam Ferguson were the names then conspicuous in Edinburgh, and it was in the company of these men, that Burns first realized that he was no mere bard of local note—the pastoral poet of some quiet glen—but a new power and magnate in Scottish and British literature. Scott was then a lad of sixteen, just removed from the High School of Edinburgh to a desk in his father's office. He was invited by his friend and companion, the son of Dr. Ferguson of the High School, to accompany him to his father's house on an evening when Burns was to be there. The two youngsters entered the room, sat down unnoticed by their seniors, and looked on and listened.

Burns, when he came in, seemed a little out of his element. Instead of mingling at once with the company, he kept going about the room, looking at the pictures on the walls. One print particularly arrested his attention. It represented a soldier lying dead among snow, his dog on one side, and a woman with a child in her arms on the other. Underneath the print were some lines of verse descriptive of the subject, which Burns read aloud in a voice vibrating with emotion:

> Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew;
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptised in tears.

Burns turned to the company and, pointing to the print, asked if anyone could tell him who was the author of the lines. No one chanced to know except the boy Scott, who remembered that they were from a poem by Langhorne. The information, whispered by Scott to someone near, was repeated to Burns; who, after asking a little more about the matter, rewarded his young informant with a look of kindly interest, and the words, "You'll be a man yet, sir."

Had Burns asked about the lineage and early years of this shy lame boy with the blue eyes, long upper lip, sweet mouth and wonderful conical head thatched with light-brown hair, he would have learned some facts that could not but have interested him. A few of these facts may be glanced at here; they will reveal to us that quality which is peculiar to Scott's genius.

Scott begins his brief autobiography with the announcement, "Every Scotchman has a pedigree." In his own pedi-

gree he took marked pride, and certain elements in it were peculiarly gratifying to his feelings of nationality and to his imagination. They help to explain why Scott is the most representative man of his race; how it happened that, as Carlyle said of him, "no Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott; the good, and the not so good, running through every fibre of him." It was the family pride of the North Country that led him into courses that ended in commercial ruin; it was family pride that in his last years proved a working principle capable of inspiring and maintaining a chivalrous conception of duty.

Scott's Ancestry

On his father's side Scott was the lineal descendant of that Walter Scott of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, who is known in Border history and legend as Auld Watt of Harden. Auld Watt married a girl famous for her good looks and known up and down the Borderland as the Flower of Yarrow. She bore him six stalwart sons, and it sometimes happened that, when the giants strode in to dinner with appetites whetted by the chase and the mountain breeze, they found on uncovering the dishes, a pair of clean spurs in each, placed there by the hands of the Flower herself. That night an English farmer would mourn over empty stalls. A prompt, grim old man was the laird of Harden—no danger of his armor rusting or of grass growing under his horse's hoofs! The Flower of Yarrow, according to Border tradition, owed her celebrity chiefly to the love of an English captive—a beautiful child whom she had rescued from the tender mercies of Watt's moss-troopers on their return from a foray into Cumberland. The youth grew

up under her protection, and local legend attributes to him the words and music of not a few of the anonymous songs of Teviotdale, Eskdale, and Liddesdale.

Auld Watt's eldest son was captured by a rival chief, Sir Gideon Murray, and given the choice between being hanged and marrying the ugliest of Sir Gideon's three ugly daughters, Agnes, better known by the alliterative sobriquet of Meikle-mouthed Meg, who had the reputation of being the most ill-favored woman in all the Borderland. The poor fellow took three days to consider the matter and chose life with Meikle-mouthed Meg, who became a most exemplary wife, skilled in pickling the beef stolen from the English side of the Border. The contract of marriage, written on parchment taken from a drum, is still in the possession of the family of Harden. Scott was proud of his descent from Agnes of the Big Mouth, two portraits of whom hang on the walls of Abbotsford, and he would humorously refer to his own portentously long upper lip as an inheritance from her. Many rhyming versions of the story just narrated are still common in Scotland, and Browning made it the theme of one of the most spirited of his later narrative poems.

Scott's great-grandfather was the staunch old Jacobite, known as Beardie, because he would never cut his beard after the banishment of the Stuarts. This is alluded to in the Introduction to the Sixth Canto of *Marmion* (lines 86–106):

> Still linger in our northern clime
> Some remnants of the good old time,
> And still within our valleys here
> We hold the kindred title dear,
> Even when, perchance, its far-fetched claim
> To Southron ear sounds empty name;

For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus my Christmas still I hold
Where my great-grandsire came of old,
With amber beard and flaxen hair
And reverend apostolic air,
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitched into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast
That he was loyal to his cost,
The banished race of kings revered,
And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

To this passage Scott appended in the first edition of *Marmion* the following interesting note:

Mr. Scott of Harden, my kind and affectionate friend, and distant relation, has the original of a poetical invitation, addressed from his grandfather to my relative, from which a few lines in the text are imitated. They are dated, as the epistle in the text, from Mertoun-house, the seat of the Harden family.

With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air,
Free of anxiety and care,
Come hither, Christmas-day, and dine;
We'll mix sobriety with wine,
And easy mirth with thoughts divine.
We Christians think it holiday,
On it no sin to feast or play;
Others, in spite, may fast and pray.
No superstition in the use
Our ancestors made of a goose;
Why may not we, as well as they,
Be innocently blithe that day,

On goose or pye, on wine or ale,
And scorn enthusiastic zeal?—
Pray come, and welcome, or plague rott
Your friend and landlord, Walter Scott.

Mr. Walter Scott, Lessudden

The venerable old gentleman to whom the lines are addressed, was the younger brother of William Scott of Raeburn. Being the cadet of a cadet of the Harden family, he had very little to lose; yet he contrived to lose the small property he had, by engaging in the civil wars and intrigues of the house of Stuart. His veneration for the exiled family was so great, that he swore he would not shave his beard till they were restored: a mark of attachment, which, I suppose, had been common during Cromwell's usurpation; for, in Cowley's *Cutter of Coleman Street*, one drunken cavalier upbraids another, that, when he was not able to afford to pay a barber, he affected to "wear a beard for the king." I sincerely hope this was not absolutely the original reason of my ancestor's beard; which, as appears from a portrait in the possession of Sir Henry Hay Macdougal, Bart. and another painted for the famous Dr. Pitcairn, was a beard of a most dignified and venerable appearance.

Beardie's second son Robert—the poet's grandfather—made his life as a farmer at Sandy-Knowe livelier than it would otherwise have been, by speculating and horse-dealing. Here is a characteristic story of him that his grandson loved to tell. On one occasion Robert Scott, always hard up, borrowed thirty pounds from one of his own shepherds, who was willing to advance that sum to enable his master to invest it in sheep. The two set off to purchase a flock near Wooler, in Northumberland, but when the shepherd had found what he thought would suit their purpose, he returned to find his master galloping about a fine hunter, on which he had spent the whole capital in hand. This speculating sheep-farmer's

eldest son was the poet's father. He became a lawyer in Edinburgh—the first of his race to adopt a town life and a sedentary profession. He had a fine but singular disposition, was simple-hearted and extremely handsome, with warm affections under most formal manners and a generosity that strayed beyond professional bounds. He was a man who conducted all conventional arrangements with grandeur and dignity and, as his son loved to tell, absolutely loved a funeral! This ceremonious, orderly, industrious lawyer, the prototype of Saunders Fairford in *Redgauntlet*, married Anne Rutherford, a descendant of the old Border family of Swinton, a woman of imagination and culture, and Walter, the ninth of twelve children, of whom the first six died in early childhood, was born on August 15, 1771.

Scott's Literary Life

As may be seen at a glance in the chronological table subjoined, Scott was contemporaneous with the poets and novelists who, at the close of the eighteenth century and during the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth, brought about that change in the literature of the English-speaking world which is often called the triumph of romanticism. This movement was primarily, to use Professor Herford's words, a development of imaginative sensibility. "At countless points the universe of sense and thought acquired a new potency of response and appeal to man, a new capacity of ministering to, and mingling with, his richest and intensest life. Glory of lake and mountain, grace of childhood, dignity of the untaught peasant, wonder of faërie, mystery of the Gothic aisle, radiance of Attic marble—all these springs of the poet's in-

spiration and the artist's joy began to flow. . . . To rekindle the soul of the past, or to reveal a soul where no eye had yet discerned it . . . to invest lake and mountain with 'the light that never was on sea or land'; to make the natural appear supernatural, as Wordsworth and Coleridge put it, or the supernatural natural—were but different avenues to the world of Romance."

A year younger than Wordsworth, a year older than Coleridge, Scott became with them a powerful influence in bringing about this great awakening, this renascence of wonder. The movement was carried to new heights and depths by younger men, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. Conservative to the core, Scott was kept from revolutionary extravagancies in subject matter and diction; subtle philosophizing was alien to his sturdy common sense. His frank appeal to what is basic and universal in human experience made him the romanticist that he is. His themes are elemental as dawn, sunset, a night of stars, birth, love and death; his treatment is simple, sincere, reverent. His avowed aim was to ingraft modern refinement on ancient simplicity and to preserve the energy of the old ballad without its rudeness and bareness.

Scott's life as a writer falls into two periods of exactly eighteen years each. The first of these extends from 1796—the year in which Burns died and Carlyle was twelve months old—when Scott published his translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, until 1814, when *Waverley* appeared. This period, from Scott's twenty-fifth to his forty-third year, is that of his verse, edited, translated, and original. The second period, from 1814 to 1832, is that of his prose, the Waverley Novels and formal historical writings. It is the time of his wealth and his fall into financial ruin. During the first twelve years of this sec-

ond period Scott wrote his finest novels and built his famous baronial mansion, Abbotsford, on the banks of his beloved Tweed. The remaining six years are marked by grinding taskwork, bodily infirmities, and the overburdened brain shattered by apoplexy and paralysis, until death released him in 1832.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Period I. Verse. 1796–1814

Year	Scott's Publications	Other Literature	History and Biography
1796	Translations from Bürger etc.	Washington's *Farewell Address* Coleridge's *Poems*	Burns died Napoleonic wars
1797		Bewick's *British Birds*	Burke died Napoleon crossed Alps
1798		*The Lyrical Ballads* (Wordsworth; Coleridge) Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*	Battle of the Nile
1799	Translation of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen. Ballads*	Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*	Balzac born Heine born Washington died
1800	*The Eve of St. John and other original Ballads*	Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*	Cowper died. Macaulay born. Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Beethoven's First Symphony
1801		'Monk' Lewis: *Tales of Wonder*	Battle of Copenhagen Jefferson, President of the United States of America
1802	*Minstrelsy of Scottish Border* (Vols. I and II)	*Edinburgh Review* established	Victor Hugo born
1803	*Minstrelsy of Scottish Border* (Vol. III). Reviews		Emerson born Louisiana Purchase
1804	Ed. *Sir Tristrem* (Metrical Romance)	Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*	Kant died. Napoleon became Emperor
1805	*Lay of the Last Minstrel.* Reviews		Battles of Trafalgar and Austerlitz. Schiller died

Year	Scott's Publications	Other Literature	History and Biography
1806	*Ballads and Lyrical Pieces.* Reviews	Coleridge's *Christabel*	Battle of Jena
1807		Byron's *Hours of Idleness*	Longfellow born
1808	*Marmion.* Ed. Dryden's Works	Wilson's *American Ornithology* (Vol. I) *Quarterly Review* established	Peninsular War
1809	Reviews	Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*	Battle of Corunna Tennyson, Darwin, Gladstone, Lincoln, Poe, Holmes born
1810	*Lady of the Lake*	J. Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*	
1811	*Vision of Don Roderick*	J. Austen's *Sense and Sensibility.* Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (First Part)	Thackeray born
1812	*Rokeby*	J. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice.* Byron's *Childe Harold* (Cantos I, II), Crabbe's *Tales*	Browning, Dickens born War between Great Britain and the United States Napoleon's Russian campaign
1813	*Bridal of Triermain*	Byron's *Giaour, Bride of Abydos.* Shelley's *Queen Mab*	Battle of Leipzig

Period II. Prose. 1814–1832

1814	*Waverley.* Ed. Swift's Works	J. Austen's *Mansfield Park.* Byron's *Lara* Wordsworth's *Excursion*	Congress of Vienna
1815	*Lord of the Isles* *Guy Mannering* *Field of Waterloo*	Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* Wordsworth's *White Doe* *North American Review* established	Battle of Waterloo. Holy Alliance
1816	*The Antiquary* *The Black Dwarf* *Old Mortality*	J. Austen's *Emma* Shelley's *Alastor* Byron's *Childe Harold* (Canto III)	Charlotte Brontë born

YEAR	SCOTT'S PUBLICATIONS	OTHER LITERATURE	HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
1817	*Rob Roy*	Byron's *Manfred* Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* Moore's *Lalla Rookh* Bryant's *Thanatopsis* *Blackwood's Magazine* established	J. Austen died Madame de Staël died
1818	*Heart of Midlothian*	Keats's *Endymion* Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* Irving's *Sketch Book*	Emily Brontë born
1819	*The Bride of Lammermoor and Legend of Montrose* *Ivanhoe*	Byron's *Don Juan* (Cantos I, II) Shelley's *Cenci* Wordsworth's *Waggoner*	Kingsley, Ruskin, Lowell born George Eliot born
1820	*The Monastery* *The Abbot*	Keats's *Lamia, Isabella, Eve of St. Agnes, Hyperion.* Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*	Missouri Compromise
1821	*Kenilworth* *The Pirate*	Byron's *Cain, Marino Faliero, Sardanapalus* DeQuincey's *Confessions* Shelley's *Adonais, Epipsychidion.* Bryant's *Poems.* Cooper's *Spy*	Keats died Greek struggle for independence began; continued until 1829
1822	*Fortunes of Nigel*	Lamb's *Essays of Elia*	Shelley drowned Matthew Arnold born
1823	*Peveril of the Peak* *Quentin Durward* *St. Ronan's Well*	Cooper's *Pilot, Pioneers*	Monroe Doctrine formulated
1824	*Redgauntlet*	Carlyle's Translation of *Wilhelm Meister* *Westminster Review* established	Byron died in Greece in the cause of liberty La Fayette in United States
1825	*The Betrothed* *The Talisman*	Carlyle's *Schiller* Macaulay's *Milton*	Richter died Saint-Simon died
1826	*Woodstock*	Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* Heine's *Reisebilder*	
1827	*Chronicles of the Canongate* (*Two Drovers, Highland Widow, Surgeon's Daughter*). *Tales of a Grandfather* (First Series)	Keble's *Christian Year* Heine's *Buch der Lieder* Audubon's *Birds of America* Poe's *Tamerlaine*	Blake died Battle of Navarino
1828	*Fair Maid of Perth*	Hawthorne's *Fanshawe*	Catholic Emancipation in England George Meredith born D. G. Rossetti born

Year	Scott's Publications	Other Literature	History and Biography
1829	*Anne of Geierstein*	A. Tennyson's *Timbuctoo*	
1830	*Doom of Devorgoil* *Essays on Ballad Poetry* *Letters on Demonology*	Tennyson's *Poems chiefly Lyrical*	Hazlitt died
1831	*Count Robert of Paris* *Castle Dangerous*	Ebenezer Elliott's *Corn-Law Rhymes* Hugo's *Notre Dame* Poe's *Poems* Whittier's *Legends of New England*	Webster's debate with Hayne
1832			DEATH OF SCOTT Goethe died. Freneau died. Reform Bill passed

II. SCOTT'S "ADVERTISEMENT"

Scott began the composition of *Marmion* in November, 1806, and continued to work upon it at intervals during the subsequent year. Though the success of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* afforded every desirable reason for his making this new attempt in poetry, he has himself stated that he would not have, so soon at least, ventured upon so important an effort, if he had not been anxious to possess funds necessary for relieving his brother from certain financial embarrassments. In consequence of his anxiety to obtain these funds, he made a bargain with Messrs. Constable and Company, as early as January, 1807, for the copyright of the poem, at the price of a thousand guineas, and he actually realised this liberal purchase-money a good while before the work was completed. The world was equally astonished at the mercantile enterprise which could propose, and the poetical genius which could appear to deserve, a reward so splendid. Nor was it one bookselling house only which was disposed to rate the

merits of Scott thus highly; for Murray of Fleet Street, and Miller of Albemarle Street, gladly united to relieve Constable of one half of his venture.

The poem was published, in quarto, in February, 1808, and, immediately after the Dedication (see below, IV. Scott's Original Dedication) was the following:

ADVERTISEMENT

It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the Public have honoured with some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of MARMION *must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprize his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of* THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, *that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.*

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September, 1513.

Ashestiel, 1808.

III. SCOTT'S INTRODUCTION

[The following Introduction was written by Scott for the edition of 1830, published in connection with a reissue of his complete works in verse and prose.]

WHAT I have to say respecting this Poem may be briefly told. In the Introduction to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, I have mentioned the circumstances, so far as my literary life is concerned, which induced me to resign the active pursuit of an honourable profession, for the more precarious resources of literature. My appointment to the Sheriffdom of Selkirk called for a change of residence. I left, therefore, the pleasant cottage I had upon the side of the Esk, for the "pleasanter banks of the Tweed," in order to comply with the law, which requires that the Sheriff shall be resident, at least during a certain number of months, within his jurisdiction. We found a delightful retirement, by my becoming the tenant of my intimate friend and cousin-german, Colonel Russel, in his mansion of Ashestiel, which was unoccupied, during his absence on military service in India. The house was adequate to our accommodation, and the exercise of a limited hospitality. The situation is uncommonly beautiful, by the side of a fine river, whose streams are there very favourable for angling, surrounded by the remains of natural woods, and by hills abounding in game. In point of society, according to the heartfelt phrase of Scripture, we dwelt "amongst our own people"; and as the distance from the metropolis was only thirty miles, we were not out of reach of our Edinburgh friends, in which city we spent the terms of the summer and winter Sessions of the Court, that is, five or six months in the year.

An important circumstance had, about the same time, taken place in my life. Hopes had been held out to me from an influential quarter, of a nature to relieve me from the anxiety which I must have otherwise felt, as one upon the precarious tenure of whose own life rested the principal prospects of his family, and especially as one who had necessarily some dependence upon the favour of the public, which is proverbially capricious; though it is but justice to add, that, in my own case, I have not found it so. Mr. Pitt had expressed a wish to my personal friend, the Right Honourable William Dundas, now Lord Clerk Register of Scotland, that some fitting opportunity should be taken to be of service to me; and as my views and wishes pointed to a future rather than an immediate provision, an opportunity of accomplishing this was soon found. One of the Principal Clerks of Session, as they are called (official persons who occupy an important and responsible situation, and enjoy a considerable income), who had served upwards of thirty years, felt himself, from age, and the infirmity of deafness with which it was accompanied, desirous of retiring from his official situation. As the law then stood, such official persons were entitled to bargain with their successors, either for a sum of money, which was usually a considerable one, or for an interest in the emoluments of the office during their life. My predecessor, whose services had been unusually meritorious, stipulated for the emoluments of his office during his life, while I should enjoy the survivorship, on the condition that I discharged the duties of the office in the meantime. Mr. Pitt, however, having died in the interval, his administration was dissolved, and was succeeded by that known by the name of the Fox and Grenville Ministry. My affair was so far completed, that my com-

mission lay in the office subscribed by his Majesty; but, from hurry or mistake, the interest of my predecessor was not expressed in it, as had been usual in such cases. Although, therefore, it only required payment of the fees, I could not in honour take out the commission in the present state, since, in the event of my dying before him, the gentleman whom I succeeded must have lost the vested interest which he had stipulated to retain. I had the honour of an interview with Earl Spencer on the subject, and he, in the most handsome manner, gave directions that the commission should issue as originally intended; adding, that the matter having received the royal assent, he regarded only as a claim of justice what he would have willingly done as an act of favour. I never saw Mr. Fox on this, or on any other occasion, and never made any application to him, conceiving that in doing so I might have been supposed to express political opinions contrary to those which I had always professed. In his private capacity, there is no man to whom I would have been more proud to owe an obligation, had I been so distinguished.

By this arrangement I obtained the survivorship of an office, the emoluments of which were fully adequate to my wishes; and as the law respecting the mode of providing for superannuated officers was, about five or six years after, altered from that which admitted the arrangement of assistant and successor, my colleague very handsomely took the opportunity of the alteration, to accept of the retiring annuity provided in such cases, and admitted me to the full benefit of the office.

But although the certainty of succeeding to a considerable income, at the time I obtained it, seemed to assure me of a quiet harbour in my old age, I did not escape my share of

inconvenience from the contrary tides and currents by which we are so often encountered in our journey through life. Indeed, the publication of my next poetical attempt was prematurely accelerated, from one of those unpleasant accidents which can neither be foreseen nor avoided.

I had formed the prudent resolution to endeavour to bestow a little more labour than I had yet done on my productions, and to be in no hurry again to announce myself as a candidate for literary fame. Accordingly, particular passages of a poem, which was finally called *Marmion*, were laboured with a good deal of care, by one by whom much care was seldom bestowed. Whether the work was worth the labour or not, I am no competent judge; but I may be permitted to say, that the period of its composition was a very happy one, in my life; so much so, that I remember with pleasure, at this moment, some of the spots in which particular passages were composed. It is probably owing to this, that the Introductions to the several Cantos assumed the form of familiar epistles to my intimate friends, in which I alluded, perhaps more than was necessary or graceful, to my domestic occupations and amusements—a loquacity which may be excused by those who remember, that I was still young, light-headed, and happy, and that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

The misfortunes of a near relation and friend, which happened at this time, led me to alter my prudent determination, which had been, to use great precaution in sending this poem into the world; and made it convenient at least, if not absolutely necessary, to hasten its publication. The publishers of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, emboldened by the success of that poem, willingly offered a thousand pounds for *Marmion*.

The transaction being no secret, afforded Lord Byron, who was then at general war with all who blacked paper, an apology for including me in his satire, entitled *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.[1] I never could conceive how an arrangement between an author and his publishers, if satisfactory to the persons concerned, could afford matter of censure to any third party. I had taken no unusual or ungenerous means of enhancing the value of my merchandise—I had never higgled a moment about the bargain, but accepted at once what I considered the handsome offer of my publishers. These gentlemen, at least, were not of opinion that they had been taken advantage of in the transaction, which indeed was

[1] ["Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base.
And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance.
Though Murray with his Miller may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame;
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain;
And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain!
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long 'Good-night to Marmion.'"

BYRON'S *Works*, vol. vii., p. 235–6]

one of their own framing; on the contrary, the sale of the Poem was so far beyond their expectation, as to induce them to supply the author's cellars with what is always an acceptable present to a young Scottish housekeeper, namely, a hogshead of excellent claret.

The Poem was finished in too much haste, to allow me an opportunity of softening down, if not removing, some of its most prominent defects. The nature of Marmion's guilt, although similar instances were found, and might be quoted, as existing in feudal times, was nevertheless not sufficiently peculiar to be indicative of the character of the period, forgery being the crime of a commercial, rather than a proud and warlike age. This gross defect ought to have been remedied or palliated. Yet I suffered the tree to lie as it had fallen. I remember my friend, Dr. Leyden, then in the East, wrote me a furious remonstrance on the subject. I have, nevertheless, always been of opinion, that corrections, however in themselves judicious, have a bad effect—after publication. An author is never so decidedly condemned as on his own confession, and may long find apologists and partisans until he gives up his own cause. I was not, therefore, inclined to afford matter for censure out of my own admissions; and, by good fortune, the novelty of the subject, and, if I may say so, some force and vivacity of description, were allowed to atone for many imperfections. Thus the second experiment on the public patience, generally the most perilous,—for the public are then most apt to judge with rigour, what in the first instance they had received, perhaps, with imprudent generosity,—was in my case decidedly successful. I had the good fortune to pass this ordeal favourably, and the return of sales before me makes the copies amount to thirty-six

thousand printed between 1808 and 1825, besides a considerable sale since that period. I shall here pause upon the subject of *Marmion*, and, in a few prefatory words to *The Lady of the Lake*, the last poem of mine which obtained eminent success, I will continue the task which I have imposed on myself respecting the origin of my productions.

ABBOTSFORD, *April*, 1830

IV. SCOTT'S ORIGINAL DEDICATION

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY, LORD MONTAGUE,

ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR

V. THE BATTLE OF FLODDEN

[From Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*. This work, originally written to interest his crippled grandchild, "Hugh Littlejohn" of pathetic memory, in Scottish history, remains and is likely to remain the most significant and satisfactory history of Scotland. When dreaming of these stories for "little Johnnie Lockhart," Scott makes this jotting in the *Journal* ("Gurnal" was his humorous spelling—'gurn,' dialectic for 'grumble') kept by him during the last six years of his life: "I am persuaded both children and the lower class of readers hate books which are written *down* to

their capacity, and love those that are composed more for their elders and betters. I will make, if possible, a book that a child shall understand, yet a man will feel some temptation to peruse should he chance to take it up."]

"Meanwhile James, contrary to the advice of his wisest counsellors, determined to invade England with a royal army. The Parliament were unwilling to go into the King's measures. The tranquillity of the country, ever since the peace with England, was recollected, and as the impolitic claim of the supremacy seemed to be abandoned, little remained to stir up the old animosity between the kingdoms. The King, however, was personally so much liked, that he obtained the consent of the Parliament to this fatal and unjust war; and orders were given to assemble all the array of the kingdom of Scotland upon the Borough-moor of Edinburgh, a wide common, in the midst of which the royal standard was displayed from a large stone, or fragment of rock, called the Hare-stone.

"Various measures were even in this extremity resorted to for preventing the war. One or two of them seem to have been founded upon a knowledge, that the King's temper was tinged with a superstitious melancholy, partly arising from constitutional habits, partly from the remorse which he always entertained for his accession to his father's death. It was to these feelings that the following scene was doubtless addressed:

"As the King was at his devotions in the church of Linlithgow, a figure, dressed in an azure-coloured robe, girt with a girdle, or sash of linen, having sandals on his feet, with long yellow hair, and a grave commanding countenance, suddenly appeared before him. This singular-looking person paid little

or no respect to the royal presence, but pressing up to the desk at which the King was seated, leaned down on it with his arms, and addressed him with little reverence. He declared, that 'his Mother laid her commands on James to forbear the journey which he purposed, seeing that neither he, nor any who went with him, would thrive in the undertaking.' He also cautioned the King against frequenting the society of women, and using their counsel; 'if thou dost,' said he, 'thou shalt be confounded and brought to shame.'

"These words spoken, the messenger escaped from among the courtiers so suddenly, that he seemed to disappear. There is no doubt that this person had been dressed up to represent Saint John, called in Scripture the adopted son of the Virgin Mary. The Roman Catholics believed in the possibility of the souls of departed saints and apostles appearing on earth, and many impostures are recorded in history of the same sort with that I have just told you.

"Another story, not so well authenticated, says, that a proclamation was heard at the Market-cross of Edinburgh, at the dead of night, summoning the King, by his name and titles, and many of his nobles and principal leaders, to appear before the tribunal of Pluto within the space of forty days. This also has the appearance of a stratagem, invented to deter the King from his expedition.

"But neither these artifices, nor the advice and entreaty of Margaret, the Queen of Scotland, could deter James from his unhappy expedition. He was so well beloved, that he soon assembled a great army, and placing himself at their head, he entered England near the castle of Twisell, on the 22d of August, 1513. He speedily obtained possession of the Border fortresses of Norham, Wark, Etall, Ford, and others of less

note, and collected a great spoil. Instead, however, of advancing with his army upon the country of England, which lay defenceless before him, the King is said to have trifled away his time, in an intercourse of gallantry with Lady Heron of Ford, a beautiful woman, who contrived to divert him from the prosecution of his expedition until the approach of an English army.

"While James lay thus idle on the frontier, the Earl of Surrey, that same noble and gallant knight who had formerly escorted Queen Margaret to Scotland, now advanced at the head of an army of twenty-six thousand men. The Earl was joined by his son Thomas, the Lord High Admiral, with a large body of soldiers who had been disembarked at Newcastle. As the warlike inhabitants of the northern counties gathered fast to Surrey's standard, so, on the other hand, the Scots began to return home in great numbers; because, though, according to the feudal laws, each man had brought with him provisions for forty days, these being now nearly expended, a scarcity began to be felt in James's host. Others went home to place their booty in safety.

"Surrey, feeling himself the stronger party, became desirous to provoke the Scottish King to fight. He therefore sent James a message, defying him to battle; and the Lord Thomas Howard, at the same time, added a message, that as King James had often complained of the death of Andrew Barton, he, Lord Thomas, by whom that deed was done, was now ready to maintain it with his sword in the front of the fight. James returned, for answer, that to meet the English in battle was so much his wish, that had the message of the Earl found him at Edinburgh, he would have laid aside all other business to have met him on a pitched field.

"But the Scottish nobles entertained a very different opinion from their King. They held a council, at which Lord Patrick Lindsay was made president, or chancellor. This was the same person who, in the beginning of the King's reign, had pleaded so well for his brother, to whose titles and estate he afterwards succeeded. He opened the discussion, by telling the council a parable of a rich merchant, who would needs go to play at dice with a common hazarder, or sharper, and stake a rose-noble of gold against a crooked halfpenny. 'You, my lords,' he said, 'will be as unwise as the merchant, if you risk your King, whom I compare to a precious rose-noble, against the English general, who is but an old crooked churl, lying in a chariot. Though the English lose the day, they lose nothing but this old churl and a parcel of mechanics; whereas so many of our common people have gone home, that few are left with us but the prime of our nobility.' He therefore gave it as his advice, that the King should withdraw from the army, for safety of his person, and that some brave nobleman should be named by the council, to command in the action. The council agreed to recommend this plan to the King.

"But James, who desired to gain fame by his own military skill and prowess, suddenly broke in on the council, and told them, with much heat, that they should not put such a disgrace upon him. 'I will fight with the English,' he said, 'though you had all sworn the contrary. You may shame yourselves by flight, but you shall not shame me; and as for Lord Patrick Lindsay, who has got the first vote, I vow, that when I return to Scotland, I will cause him to be hanged over his own gate.'

"In this rash and precipitate resolution to fight at all risks, the King was much supported by the French ambassador, De la Motte. This was remarked by one of our old acquaintances, the Earl of Angus, called Bell-the-Cat, who, though very old, had come out to the field with his Sovereign. He charged the Frenchman with being willing to sacrifice the interests of Scotland to those of his own country, which required that the Scots and English should fight at all hazards; and Angus, like Lord Lindsay, alleged the difference between the parties, the English being many of them men but of mean rank, and the Scottish army being the flower of their nobility and gentry. Incensed at his opposition, James said to him scornfully, 'Angus, if you are afraid, you may go home.' The Earl, on receiving such an insult, left the camp that night; but his two sons remained, and fell in the fatal battle, with two hundred of the name of Douglas.

"While King James was in this stubborn humour, the Earl of Surrey had advanced as far as Wooler, so that only four or five miles divided the armies. The English leader enquired anxiously for some guide, who was acquainted with the country, which is intersected and divided by one or two large brooks, which unite to form the river Till, and is, besides, in part mountainous. A person well mounted, and completely armed, but having the visor of his helmet lowered, to conceal his face, rode up, and then dismounting, knelt down before the Earl, and offered to be his guide, if he might obtain pardon of an offence of which he had been guilty. The Earl assured him of his forgiveness, providing he had not committed treason against the King of England, or personally wronged any lady—crimes which Surrey declared he would not pardon. 'God forbid,' said the cavalier, 'that I should

have been guilty of such shameful sin; I did but assist in killing a Scotsman, who ruled our Borders too strictly, and often did wrong to Englishmen.' So saying, he raised the visor of his helmet, which hid his face, and showed the countenance of the Bastard Heron, who had been a partner in the assassination of Sir Robert Ker, as you were told before. His appearance was most welcome to the Earl of Surrey, who readily pardoned him the death of a Scotsman at that moment, especially since he knew him to be as well acquainted with every pass and path on the eastern frontier, as a life of constant incursion and depredation could make him.

"The Scottish army had fixed their camp upon a hill called Flodden, which rises to close in, as it were, the extensive flat called Millfield Plain. This eminence slopes steeply towards the plain, and there is an extended piece of level ground on the top, where the Scots might have drawn up their army, and awaited at great advantage the attack of the English. Surrey liked the idea of venturing an assault on that position so ill, that he resolved to try whether he could not prevail on the King to abandon it. He sent a herald to invite James to come down from the height, and join battle in the open plain of Millfield below—reminded him of the readiness with which he had accepted his former challenge—and hinted that it was the opinion of the English chivalry assembled for battle, that any delay of the encounter would sound to the King's dishonour.

"We have seen that James was sufficiently rash and imprudent, but his impetuosity did not reach to the pitch Surrey perhaps expected. He refused to receive the messenger into his presence, and returned for answer to the message, that it was not such as it became an Earl to send to a King.

"Surrey, therefore, distressed for provisions, was obliged to resort to another mode of bringing the Scots to action. He moved northward, sweeping round the hill of Flodden, keeping out of the reach of the Scottish artillery, until, crossing the Till near Twisell Castle, he placed himself, with his whole army, betwixt James and his own kingdom. The King suffered him to make this flank movement without interruption, though it must have afforded repeated and advantageous opportunities for attack. But when he saw the English army interposed betwixt him and his dominions, he became alarmed lest he should be cut off from Scotland. In this apprehension he was confirmed by one Giles Musgrave, an Englishman, whose counsel he used upon the occasion, and who assured him, that if he did not descend and fight with the English army, the Earl of Surrey would enter Scotland, and lay waste the whole country. Stimulated by this apprehension, the King resolved to give signal for the fatal battle.

"With this view the Scots set fire to their huts, and the other refuse and litter of their camp. The smoke spread along the side of the hill, and under its cover the army of King James descended the eminence, which is much less steep on the northern than the southern side, while the English advanced to meet them, both concealed from each other by the clouds of smoke.

"The Scots descended in four strong columns, all marching parallel to each other, having a reserve of the Lothian men commanded by Earl Bothwell. The English were also divided into four bodies, with a reserve of cavalry led by Dacre.

"The first which encountered was the left wing of the Scots, commanded by the Earl of Huntly and Lord Home, which over-powered and threw into disorder the right wing

of the English, under Sir Edmund Howard. Sir Edmund was beaten down, his standard taken, and he himself in danger of instant death, when he was relieved by the Bastard Heron, who came up at the head of a band of determined outlaws like himself, and extricated Howard. It is objected to the Lord Home by many Scottish writers, that he ought to have improved his advantage, by hastening to the support of the next division of the Scottish army. It is even pretended, that he replied to those who urged him to go to the assistance of the King, that 'the man did well that day who stood and saved himself.' But this seems invented, partly to criminate Home, and partly to account for the loss of the battle in some other way than by the superiority of the English. In reality, the English cavalry, under Dacre, which acted as a reserve, appear to have kept the victors in check; while Thomas Howard, the Lord High Admiral, who commanded the second division of the English, bore down, and routed the Scottish division commanded by Crawford and Montrose, who were both slain. Thus matters went on the Scottish left.

"Upon the extreme right of James's army, a division of Highlanders, consisting of the clans of MacKenzie, MacLean, and others, commanded by the Earls of Lennox and Argyle, were so insufferably annoyed by the volleys of the English arrows, that they broke their ranks, and, in despite of the cries, entreaties, and signals of De la Motte, the French ambassador, who endeavored to stop them, rushed tumultuously downhill, and being attacked at once in flank and rear by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Cheshire and Lancashire, were routed with great slaughter.

"The only Scottish division which remains to be mentioned, was commanded by James in person, and consisted of the

choicest of his nobles and gentry, whose armour was so good, that the arrows made but slight impression upon them. They were all on foot—the King himself had parted with his horse. They engaged the Earl of Surrey, who opposed to them the division which he personally commanded. The Scots attacked with the greatest fury, and, for a time, had the better. Surrey's squadrons were disordered, his standard in great danger, Bothwell and the Scottish reserve were advancing, and the English seemed in some risk of losing the battle. But Stanley, who had defeated the Highlanders, came up on one flank of the King's division; the Admiral, who had conquered Crawford and Montrose, assailed them on the other. The Scots showed the most undaunted courage. Uniting themselves with the reserve under Bothwell, they formed themselves into a circle, with their spears extended on every side, and fought obstinately. Bows being now useless, the English advanced on all sides with their bills, a huge weapon which made ghastly wounds. But they could not force the Scots either to break or retire, although the carnage among them was dreadful. James himself died amid his warlike peers and loyal gentry. He was twice wounded with arrows, and at length dispatched with a bill. Night fell without the battle being absolutely decided, for the Scottish centre kept their ground, and Home and Dacre held each other at bay. But during the night, the remainder of the Scottish army drew off in silent despair from the bloody field, on which they left their King, and their choicest nobles and gentlemen.

"This great and decisive victory was gained by the Earl of Surrey on the 9th of September, 1513. The victors had about five thousand men slain, the Scots twice that number at least. But the loss lay not so much in the number of the slain, as

in their rank and quality. The English lost very few men of distinction. The Scots left on the field the King, two bishops, two mitred abbots, twelve earls, thirteen lords, and five eldest sons of peers. The number of gentlemen slain was beyond calculation;—there is scarcely a family of name in Scottish history who did not lose a relative there."

VI. INTRODUCTION TO THE CANTOS

"As for the 'epistolary dissertation,' it must, I take it, be allowed that they interfered with the flow of the story, when readers were turning the leaves with the first ardour of curiosity; and they were not, in fact, originally intended to be interwoven in any fashion with the romance of Marmion. Though the author himself does not allude to, and had perhaps forgotten, the circumstances, when writing the Introductory Essay of 1830—they were announced, by an advertisement early in 1807, as 'Six Epistles from Ettrick Forest,' to be published in a separate volume, similar to that of the Ballads and Lyrical Pieces; and perhaps it might have been better that this first plan had been adhered to. But however that may be, are there any pages among all he ever wrote, that one would be more sorry he should not have written? They are among the most delicious portraitures that genius ever painted for itself,—buoyant, virtuous, happy genius,—exulting in its own energies, yet possessed and mastered by a clear, calm, modest mind, and happy only in diffusing happiness around it."—LOCKHART

VII. DEVIATIONS FROM HISTORY

When *Marmion* was published in 1808 not a few of the critics led by Francis Jeffrey (afterwards Lord Jeffrey), editor of the Edinburgh Review, made not a little of the charge that not only was *Marmion* carelessly constructed and the nature of Marmion's guilt emphasized unfairly, but that Scott falsified history in connection with some of the more important historical characters involved.

With regard to the nature of Marmion's guilt Scott had already in his Introduction stated that although similar instances were found and might be quoted as existing in feudal times, that guilt was, nevertheless, not sufficiently peculiar to be indicative of the character of the period, forgery being the crime of a commercial rather than of a proud and warlike age. "This gross defect ought to have been remedied or palliated. Yet I suffered the tree to lie where it had fallen."

Four obvious deviations from history are (1) "The substitution of Lady Ford for her husband as a hostage at the Scottish Court, and the alteration of his name from William to Hugh.

(2) "Placing nuns at Whitby, Tynemouth, and Holy Island in the reign of Henry VIII; also at Holy Island placing them in a house dedicated to St. Cuthbert.

(3) "Making Sir David Lindesay Lion-Herald, sixteen years before he attained that office; in this, Scott followed the old poem of *Flodden Field*.

(4) "Introducing Gawain Douglas as Bishop of Dunkeld, before he succeeded to the see."

For each of these inaccuracies Scott made apology in his

original notes to the poem. But there was little need when the difference between a poet's point of view and a scientist's is taken into account. In all imaginative work based on history there are inconsistencies for those who care to find them. Sir Walter Scott's time and space illusions, like Shakespeare's, are independent of chronometers and almanacs. In analysing a work of creative imagination a critic would do well to remember the profound significance of Orlando's words to Rosalind, "There's no clock i' the forest."

E. CHARLTON BLACK

MARMION

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST

To William Stewart Rose, Esq.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through;
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown, with double speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam.

Away hath passed the heather-bell
That bloomed so rich on Needpath-fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines;
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill.
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold:
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But shivering follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanished flower,
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower;

Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round;
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.
But oh! my country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise,
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasped the victor steel?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows;
But vainly, vainly may he shine
Where Glory weeps o'er Nelson's shrine,
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom
That shrouds, O Pitt, thy hallowed tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,
Oh, never let those names depart!
Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave
Who victor died on Gadite wave!
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given;

Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Rolled, blazed, destroyed,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launched that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar;
Who, born to guide such high emprise,
For Britain's weal was early wise;
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave!
His worth who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strained at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,
The pride, he would not crush, restrained,
Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws.

Hadst thou but lived, though stripped of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;

By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propped the tottering throne.
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh, think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey,
With Palinure's unaltered mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood,
Each call for needful rest repelled,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way!
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallowed day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,
He who preserved them, Pitt, lies here.

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh
Because his rival slumbers nigh,
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb;

For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employed and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,
They sleep with him who sleeps below:
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppressed,
And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke again,
'All peace on earth, good-will to men';
If ever from an English heart,
Oh, here let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was bartered by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonor's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch returned,

Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colors to the mast!
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honored grave,
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endowed,
How high they soared above the crowd!
Theirs was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Looked up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of Pitt and Fox alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
The wine of life is on the lees,
Genius and taste and talent gone,
Forever tombed beneath the stone,
Where—taming thought to human pride!—
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;

O'er Pitt's the mournful requiem sound,
And Fox's shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry,—
'Here let their discord with them die.
Speak not for those a separate doom
Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb;
But search the land, of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like again?'

Rest, ardent spirits, till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise!
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
The leaden silence of your hearse;
Then, oh, how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmarked from northern clime,
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The Bard you deigned to praise, your deathless
names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay awhile,
My wildered fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!
For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood
That throbs through bard in bardlike mood,
Were here a tribute mean and low,
Though all their mingled streams could flow—

Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide of ecstasy!—
It will not be—it may not last—
The vision of enchantment's past:
Like frostwork in the morning ray,
The fancy fabric melts away;
Each Gothic arch, memorial-stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle, are gone;
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copsewood wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son:
Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day
In plucking from yon fen the reed,
And watch it floating down the Tweed,
Or idly list the shrilling lay
With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
Marking its cadence rise and fail,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale;
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn,

Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learned taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst quickly tell—
For few have read romance so well—
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse;
Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move—
Alas, that lawless was their love!—
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights; or when,
A sinful man and unconfessed,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And slumbering saw the vision high
He might not view with waking eye.

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorned not such legends to prolong.

They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme;
And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald king and court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and marred
the lofty line.

Warmed by such names, well may we then,
Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance
In the fair fields of old romance;
Or seek the moated castle's cell,
Where long through talisman and spell,
While tyrants ruled and damsels wept,
Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept.
There sound the harpings of the North,
Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick again,
In all his arms, with all his train,
Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and scarf,
Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
And wizard with his wand of might,
And errant maid on palfrey white.

Around the Genius weave their spells,
Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells;
Mystery, half veiled and half revealed;
And Honor, with his spotless shield;
Attention, with fixed eye; and Fear,
That loves the tale she shrinks to hear;
And gentle Courtesy; and Faith,
Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death;
And Valor, lion-mettled lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown
A worthy meed may thus be won:
Ytene's oaks—beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,
And that Red King, who, while of old
Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
Ytene's oaks have heard again
Renewed such legendary strain;
For thou hast sung, how he of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana foiled in fight
The necromancer's felon might;
And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love:
Hear, then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST

THE CASTLE

I

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone;
The battled towers, the donjon-keep,
The loophole grates where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seemed forms of giant height;
Their armor, as it caught the rays,
Flashed back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

II

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the donjon tower,
So heavily it hung.

The scouts had parted on their search,
The castle gates were barred;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The warder kept his guard,
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.

III

A distant trampling sound he hears;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill, a plump of spears
Beneath a pennon gay;
A horseman, darting from the crowd
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade
That closed the castle barricade,
His bugle-horn he blew;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warned the captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew;
And joyfully that knight did call
To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV

'Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,

And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;
Lord Marmion waits below!'
Then to the castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarred,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparred,
And let the drawbridge fall.

V

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
His helm hung at the saddle bow;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth knight and keen,
And had in many a battle been;
The scar on his brown cheek revealed
A token true of Bosworth field;
His eyebrow dark and eye of fire
Showed spirit proud and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick moustache and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age;

His square-turned joints and strength of limb,
Showed him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

VI

Well was he armed from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel;
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnished gold embossed.
Amid the plumage of the crest
A falcon hovered on her nest,
With wings outspread and forward breast;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soared sable in an azure field:
The golden legend bore aright,
'Who checks at me, to death is dight.'
Blue was the charger's broidered rein;
Blue ribbons decked his arching mane;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue and trapped with gold.

VII

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name and knightly sires:
They burned the gilded spurs to claim,
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away;

Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe;
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four
On high his forky pennon bore;
Like swallow's tail in shape and hue,
Fluttered the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazoned sable, as before,
The towering falcon seemed to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black and jerkins blue,
With falcons broidered on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys and array
Showed they had marched a weary way.

IX

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly armed, and ordered how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the castle-yard;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared:
Entered the train, and such a clang
As then through all his turrets rang
Old Norham never heard.

X

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourished brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion crossed the court,
He scattered angels round.
'Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
Stout heart and open hand!
Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
Thou flower of English land!'

XI

Two pursuivants, whom tabards deck,
With silver scutcheon round their neck,
  Stood on the steps of stone
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
  They hailed Lord Marmion:
They hailed him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
  Of Tamworth tower and town;
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
  All as he lighted down.
'Now, largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion,
  Knight of the crest of gold!
A blazoned shield, in battle won,
  Ne'er guarded heart so bold.'

XII

They marshalled him to the castle-hall,
  Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourished the trumpet-call,
  And the heralds loudly cried,—
'Room, lordlings, room for Lord Marmion,
  With the crest and helm of gold!
Full well we know the trophies won
  In the lists at Cottiswold:

There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
To him he lost his lady-love,
And to the king his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
A sight both sad and fair;
We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
And saw his saddle bare;
We saw the victor win the crest
He wears with worthy pride,
And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
His foeman's scutcheon tied.
Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
Room, room, ye gentles gay,
For him who conquered in the right,
Marmion of Fontenaye!'

XIII

Then stepped, to meet that noble lord,
Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
Baron of Twisell and of Ford,
And Captain of the Hold;
He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
Raised o'er the pavement high,
And placed him in the upper place—
They feasted full and high:
The whiles a Northern harper rude
Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,

'How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys all,
Stout Willimondswick,
And Hardriding Dick,
And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw.'
Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
The harper's barbarous lay,
Yet much he praised the pains he took,
And well those pains did pay;
For lady's suit and minstrel's strain
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV

'Now, good Lord Marmion,' Heron says,
'Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well;
Seldom hath passed a week but joust
Or feat of arms befell.
The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
And love to couch a spear;—
Saint George! a stirring life they lead
That have such neighbors near!
Then stay with us a little space,
Our Northern wars to learn;
I pray you for your lady's grace!'
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV

The captain marked his altered look,
And gave the squire the sign;
A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
And crowned it high with wine.
'Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion;
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that page of thine
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby-towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often marked his cheeks were wet
With tears he fain would hide.
His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed,
But meeter seemed for lady fair,
To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead;
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom—when he sighed,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?'

XVI

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
He rolled his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppressed,
Yet made a calm reply:
'That boy thou thought so goodly fair,
He might not brook the Northern air.
More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarne.
Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?'—
He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whispered light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII

Unmarked, at least unrecked, the taunt,
Careless the knight replied:
'No bird whose feathers gayly flaunt
Delights in cage to bide;
Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemmed in by battlement and fosse,
And many a darksome tower,
And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light
In fair Queen Margaret's bower.

We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon on our glove,
But where shall we find leash or band
For dame that loves to rove?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She'll stoop when she has tired her wing.'—

XVIII

'Nay, if with Royal James's bride
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear;
For, to the Scottish court addressed,
I journey at our king's behest,
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me and mine a trusty guide.
I have not ridden in Scotland since
James backed the cause of that mock prince,
Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
Then did I march with Surrey's power,
What time we razed old Ayton tower.'—

XIX

'For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
Norham can find you guides enow;
For here be some have pricked as far
On Scottish ground as to Dunbar,

Have drunk the monks of Saint Bothan's ale,
And driven the beeves of Lauderdale,
Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
And given them light to set their hoods.'—

XX

'Now, in good sooth,' Lord Marmion cried,
'Were I in warlike wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack
Than your stout forayers at my back;
But as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know,
Why, through all Scotland, near and far,
Their king is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering Border spears
Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud or thirst of spoil
Break out in some unseemly broil.
A herald were my fitting guide;
Or friar sworn in peace to bide;
Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim, at the least.'

XXI

The captain mused a little space,
And passed his hand across his face.—
'Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,

The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side:
And though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
Since our last siege we have not seen.
The mass he might not sing or say
Upon one stinted meal a-day;
So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
And prayed for our success the while.
Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
Is all too well in case to ride;
The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train,
But then no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tilmouth were the man;
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and bower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since, on the vigil of Saint Bede,
In evil hour he crossed the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife,
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.

The jealous churl hath deeply swore
That, if again he venture o'er,
He shall shrive penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know,
Yet in your guard perchance will go.'

XXII

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word:
'Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach;
Full well at tables can he play,
And sweep at bowls the stake away.
None can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfullest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,
And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
And we can neither hunt nor ride
A foray on the Scottish side.
The vowed revenge of Bughtrig rude
May end in worse than loss of hood.
Let Friar John in safety still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,
Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill;
Last night, to Norham there came one
Will better guide Lord Marmion.'—

'Nephew,' quoth Heron, 'by my fay,
Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say.'—

XXIII

'Here is a holy Palmer come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome;
One that hath kissed the blessed tomb,
And visited each holy shrine
In Araby and Palestine;
On hills of Armenie hath been,
Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
Which parted at the Prophet's rod;
In Sinai's wilderness he saw
The Mount where Israel heard the law,
Mid thunder-dint, and flashing levin,
And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
He shows Saint James's cockle-shell,
Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;
And of that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.

XXIV

'To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham, and Saint Bede,
For his sins' pardon hath he prayed.

He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
But when our John hath quaffed his ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes.'—

XXV

'Gramercy!' quoth Lord Marmion,
'Full loth were I that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me
Were placed in fear or jeopardy:
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy ramblers; still
They know to charm a weary hill
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way.'—

XXVI

'Ah! noble sir,' young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,

'This man knows much, perchance e'en more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still to himself he's muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
Last night we listened at his cell;
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
He murmured on till morn, howe'er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell—I like it not—
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
No conscience clear and void of wrong
Can rest awake and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have marked ten aves and two creeds.'—

XXVII

'Let pass,' quoth Marmion; 'by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch-fiend and he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer to the castle hall.'
The summoned Palmer came in place:
His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;

The scallop shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck
  Was from Loretto brought;
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Showed pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII

Whenas the Palmer came in hall,
Nor Lord nor knight was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
  Or looked more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
  As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile
  His eye looked haggard wild:
Poor wretch, the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face and sunburnt hair
  She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,
  And blanch at once the hair;

Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
'But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair Saint Andrew's bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore.
Saint Mary grant that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!'

XXX

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask.

The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drained it merrily;
Alone the Palmer passed it by,
Though Selby pressed him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hushed the merry wassail roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard
But the slow footstep of the guard
Pacing his sober round.

XXXI

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
And first the chapel doors unclose;
Then, after morning rites were done—
A hasty mass from Friar John—
And knight and squire had broke their fast
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse.
Then came the stirrup-cup in course:
Between the baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had passed
That noble train, their lord the last.

Then loudly rung the trumpet call;
Thundered the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore;
Around the castle eddied slow
Volumes of smoke as white as snow
And hid its turrets hoar,
Till they rolled forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND

To the Rev. John Marriot, A. M.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

THE scenes are desert now and bare,
Where flourished once a forest fair,
When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon thorn—perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so gray and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough!
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!

'Here in my shade,' methinks he'd say,
'The mighty stag at noontide lay;
The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,—
The neighboring dingle bears his name,—
With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop, against the moon to howl;
The mountain-boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;
While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by through gay greenwood.
Then oft from Newark's riven tower
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals mustered round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
And I might see the youth intent
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
And through the brake, the rangers stalk,
And falconers hold the ready hawk;
And foresters in greenwood trim,
Lead in the leash the gazehounds grim,
Attentive, as the bratchet's bay
From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them as he broke away.
The startled quarry bounds amain,
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss below;
While all the rocking hills reply
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely.'

Of such proud huntings many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow.
But not more blithe that sylvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriot, was the same.
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
O'er holt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Passed by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic and in Gothic lore:
We marked each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend or its song.
All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!
No longer from thy mountains dun
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And while his honest heart glows warm
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, 'The Chieftain of the Hills!'
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks or tend the flowers,

Fair as the elves whom Janet saw
By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;
No youthful Baron's left to grace
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chace,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon:
And she is gone whose lovely face
Is but her least and lowest grace;
Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given
To show our earth the charms of heaven,
She could not glide along the air
With form more light or face more fair.
No more the widow's deafened ear
Grows quick that lady's step to hear:
At noontide she expects her not,
Nor busies her to trim the cot;
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal,
Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair—which hills so closely bind,
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil—
Her long-descended lord is gone,
And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,
Companions of my mountain joys,

Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side with what delight
They pressed to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I called his ramparts holy ground!
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled to feel my cheek,
Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs.
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot long endure;
Condemned to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar.
Yet cherish the remembrance still
Of the lone mountain and the rill;
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently,
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent
Together on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;
There is a pleasure in this pain:

It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impressed.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake:
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen nor sedge
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink,
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
Save where of land yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scattered pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie;
Nor point retiring hides a dell
Where swain or woodman lone might dwell.
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:

And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallowed soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And dying bids his bones be laid
Where erst his simple fathers prayed.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here have I thought 'twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton longed to spend his age.
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
On Bourhope's lonely top decay,
And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake and mountain's side,
To say, 'Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and gray';
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruined tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower:

And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave,
That Wizard Priest's whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;
On which no sunbeam ever shines—
So superstition's creed divines—
Thence view the lake with sullen roar
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild-swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave;
Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp and trim my fire;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard Priest was come
To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I cleared,
And smiled to think that I had feared.

But chief 'twere sweet to think such life—
Though but escape from fortune's strife—
Something most matchless good and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice,
And deem each hour to musing given
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him whose heart is ill at ease
Such peaceful solitudes displease;
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene.
There eagles scream from isle to shore;
Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as if condemned to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prisoned by enchanter's spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
And well that Palmer's form and mien
Had suited with the stormy scene,

Just on the edge, straining his ken
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,
Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
White as the snowy charger's tail,
Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriot, thy harp, on Isis strung,
To many a Border theme has rung:
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

CANTO SECOND

THE CONVENT

I

THE breeze which swept away the smoke
Round Norham Castle rolled,
When all the loud artillery spoke
With lightning-flash and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the hold,—
It curled not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloistered pile,
Bound to Saint Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stooped her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laughed to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joyed they in their honored freight;
For on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view
Their wonderment engage.
One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray,
Then shrieked because the sea-dog nigh
His round black head and sparkling eye
Reared o'er the foaming spray;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disordered by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy,
Perchance because such action graced
Her fair-turned arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess and the Novice Clare.

III

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.

Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love to her ear was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall;
The deadliest sin her mind could reach
Was of monastic rule the breach,
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower
To raise the convent's eastern tower;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She decked the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivery and gems embossed.
The poor her convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reformed on Benedictine school;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils and penitence austere
Had early quenched the light of youth:
But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
Though, vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey,

Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame;
Summoned to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair;
As yet a novice unprofessed,
Lovely and gentle, but distressed.
She was betrothed to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonored fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one who loved her for her land;
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud within Saint Hilda's gloom
Her blasted hopes and withered bloom.

VI

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seemed to mark the waves below;

Nay, seemed so fixed her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorched desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves nor breezes murmured there;
There saw she where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heaped the sand,
To hide it till the jackals come
To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII

Lovely, and gentle, and distressed—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast:
Harpers have sung and poets told
That he, in fury uncontrolled,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame;
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl and knife
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prisoned in Cuthbert's islet gray.

VIII

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They marked amid her trees the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They passed the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good saint who owned the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next they crossed themselves to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's caverned shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, marked they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reached the Holy Island's bay.

IX

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain;
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry shod, o'er sands, twice every day
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day the waves efface
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The castle with its battled walls,
The ancient monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X

In Saxon strength that abbey frowned,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle and shafted stalk
The arcades of an alleyed walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls the heathen Dane
Had poured his impious rage in vain;

And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilded in a later style,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulded in his niche the saint,
And rounded with consuming power
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI

Soon as they neared his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drowned amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose:
Down to the haven of the Isle
The monks and nuns in order file
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;

Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders in joyous mood
Rushed emulously through the flood
To hale the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And blessed them with her hand.

XII

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the convent banquet made:
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallowed eye,
The stranger sisters roam;
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there even summer night is chill.
Then, having strayed and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essayed to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid, for be it known
That their saint's honor is their own.

And with the sea-wave and the wind
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,

XIII

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told
How to their house three barons bold
  Must menial service do,
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry, 'Fie upon your name!
In wrath, for loss of sylvan game,
  Saint Hilda's priest ye slew.'—
'This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While laboring on our harbor-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear.'—
They told how in their convent-cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
  The lovely Edelfled;
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone
  When holy Hilda prayed;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found;
They told how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

XIV

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told;

How, when the rude Dane burned their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
O'er Northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose,
For, wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides
Downward to Tilmouth cell.
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street and Ripon saw
His holy corpse ere Wardilaw
Hailed him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear.
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV

Who may his miracles declare?
Even Scotland's dauntless king and heir—
  Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Loden's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale—
  Before his standard fled.
'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turned the Conqueror back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name:
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
  And hear his anvil sound;
A deadened clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
  And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.
It was more dark and lone, that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell;
Old Colwulf built it, for his fault
In penitence to dwell,
When he for cowl and beads laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was called the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was by the prelate Sexhelm made
A place of burial for such dead
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence, if so loud a shriek were sent
As reached the upper air,
The hearers blessed themselves, and said
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoaned their torments there.

XVIII

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
  Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay, and still more few
Were those who had from him the clew
  To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
The gravestones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew-drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
A cresset, in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,
With damp and darkness seemed to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

XIX

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three,

All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray.
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's there
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil;
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
And she with awe looks pale;
And he, that ancient man, whose sight
Has long been quenched by age's night,
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style,
For sanctity called through the isle
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.

Her sex a page's dress belied;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But, at the prioress' command,
A monk undid the silken band
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister professed of Fontevraud,
Whom the Church numbered with the dead,
For broken vows and convent fled.

XXI

When thus her face was given to view,—
Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistering fair,—
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood so calm and pale
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted

That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life was there;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
  Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, seared and foul,
  Feels not the import of his deed;
One whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the Tempter ever needs
To do the savagest of deeds;
For them no visioned terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt;
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death, alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak!
For there were seen in that dark wall
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall;—

Who enters at such grisly door
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread;
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless,
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Showed the grim entrance of the porch;
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were displayed,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV

These executioners were chose
As men who were with mankind foes,
And, with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired,
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove by deep penance to efface
Of some foul crime the stain;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still
As either joyed in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain
If in her cause they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, and knew not where.

XXV

And now that blind old abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom
On those the wall was to enclose
Alive within the tomb,
But stopped because that woful maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essayed;
Twice she essayed, and twice in vain,
Her accents might no utterance gain;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip:
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seemed to hear a distant rill—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And color dawned upon her cheek,
A hectic and a fluttered streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak
By autumn's stormy sky;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gathered strength,
And armed herself to bear.

It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII

'I speak not to implore your grace;
Well know I for one minute's space
Successless might I sue:
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain;
For if a death of lingering pain
To cleanse my sins be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.—
I listened to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil;
For three long years I bowed my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.
'Tis an old tale, and often told;
But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betrayed for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me!

XXVIII

'The king approved his favorite's aim;
In vain a rival barred his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attaints that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they came
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are prayed,
Their lances in the rest are laid,
They meet in mortal shock;
And hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout "Marmion, Marmion! to the sky,
De Wilton to the block!"
Say, ye who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here?
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death
Beneath a traitor's spear?
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell.'
Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gathered voice, and spake the rest.

XXIX

'Still was false Marmion's bridal stayed;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.

"Ho! shifts she thus?" King Henry cried,
"Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
If she were sworn a nun."
One way remained—the king's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land;
I lingered here, and rescue planned
For Clara and for me:
This caitiff monk for gold did swear
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And by his drugs my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be;
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice hath undone us both.

XXX

'And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betrayed,
This packet to the king conveyed,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke.—
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI

'Yet dread me from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
Full soon such vengeance will he take
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.
Behind, a darker hour ascends!
The altars quake, the crosier bends,
The ire of a despotic king
Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
Some traveller then shall find my bones
Whitening amid disjointed stones,
And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be.'

XXXII

Fixed was her look and stern her air:
Back from her shoulders streamed her hair;
The locks that wont her brow to shade
Stared up erectly from her head;
Her figure seemed to rise more high;
Her voice despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appalled the astonished conclave sate;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate

Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listened for the avenging storm;
The judges felt the victim's dread;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven:
'Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
Sinful brother, part in peace!'
From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three;
Sorrow it were and shame to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day;
But ere they breathed the fresher air
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan:
With speed their upward way they take,—
Such speed as age and fear can make,—
And crossed themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on,
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone
They seemed to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.

Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
To Warkworth cell the echoes rolled,
His beads the wakeful hermit told;
The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
But slept ere half a prayer he said;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind,
Then couched him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD

To William Erskine, Esq.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass
With varying shadow o'er the grass,
And imitate on field and furrow
Life's checkered scene of joy and sorrow;
Like streamlet of the mountain north,
Now in a torrent racing forth,
Now winding slow its silver train,
And almost slumbering on the plain;
Like breezes of the autumn day,
Whose voice inconstant dies away,
And ever swells again as fast
When the ear deems its murmur past;
Thus various, my romantic theme
Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;
Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
Weaving its maze irregular;
And pleased, we listen as the breeze
Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees:
Then, wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
Flow on, flow unconfined, my tale!

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell
I love the license all too well,
In sounds now lowly, and now strong,
To raise the desultory song?
Oft, when mid such capricious chime
Some transient fit of loftier rhyme
To thy kind judgment seemed excuse
For many an error of the muse,
Oft hast thou said, 'If, still misspent,
Thine hours to poetry are lent,
Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
Quaff from the fountain at the source;
Approach those masters o'er whose tomb
Immortal laurels ever bloom:
Instructive of the feebler bard,
Still from the grave their voice is heard;
From them, and from the paths they showed,
Choose honored guide and practised road;
Nor ramble on through brake and maze,
With harpers rude of barbarous days.

'Or deem'st thou not our later time
Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
Hast thou no elegiac verse
For Brunswick's venerable hearse?
What! not a line, a tear, a sigh,
When valor bleeds for liberty? —
Oh, hero of that glorious time,
When, with unrivalled light sublime, —

Though martial Austria, and though all
The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her foes—
The star of Brandenburg arose!
Thou couldst not live to see her beam
Forever quenched in Jena's stream.
Lamented chief!—it was not given
To thee to change the doom of Heaven,
And crush that dragon in its birth,
Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
Lamented chief!—not thine the power
To save in that presumptuous hour
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatched the spear, but left the shield!
Valor and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
Ill had it seemed thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For princedoms reft, and scutcheons riven,
And birthrights to usurpers given;
Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
And witness woes thou couldst not heal!
On thee relenting Heaven bestows
For honored life an honored close;
And when revolves, in time's sure change,
The hour of Germany's revenge,
When, breathing fury for her sake,
Some new Arminius shall awake,
Her champion, ere he strike, shall come
To whet his sword on Brunswick's tomb.

'Or of the Red-Cross hero teach,
Dauntless in dungeon as on breach.
Alike to him the sea, the shore,
The brand, the bridle, or the oar:
Alike to him the war that calls
Its votaries to the shattered walls
Which the grim Turk, besmeared with blood,
Against the Invincible made good;
Or that whose thundering voice could wake
The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ and mettled Swede
On the warped wave their death-game played;
Or that where Vengeance and Affright
Howled round the father of the fight,
Who snatched on Alexandria's sand
The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.

'Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that rung
From the wild harp which silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore
Till twice an hundred years rolled o'er;
When she, the bold Enchantress, came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame,
From the pale willow snatched the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,

Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deemed their own Shakespeare lived again.'

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers
Wouldst thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weighed
That secret power by all obeyed,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source concealed or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier termed the sway
Of habit, formed in early day?
Howe'er derived, its force confessed
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain.
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale
The freshness of the mountain gale,
Content to rear his whitened wall
Beside the dank and dull canal?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.

Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tattered plaid and rugged cheek
His northern clime and kindred speak;
Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows;
Ask if it would content him well,
At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these will he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range,
Not for fair Devon's meads forsake
Ben Nevis gray and Garry's lake.

Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charmed me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song,
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale,
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed,

Yet was poetic impulse given
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled,
But ever and anon, between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall.
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power,
And marvelled as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind
Of forayers, who with headlong force
Down from that strength had spurred their horse
Their southern rapine to renew
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, filled the hall
With revel, wassail-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still with trump and clang
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seamed with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' sleights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;

Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans in headlong sway
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war displayed;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scattered Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace
Anew each kind familiar face
That brightened at our evening fire!
From the thatched mansion's gray-haired sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Showed what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbors sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint,
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:

For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-willed imp, a grandame's child,
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caressed.

From me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conned task?
Nay, Erskine, nay—on the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimmed the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay—since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigor to my lays,
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flattened thought or cumbrous line,
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrained, my tale!

CANTO THIRD

THE HOSTEL, OR INN

I

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode;
The mountain path the Palmer showed
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely failed to bar the way.
Oft on the trampling band from crown
Of some tall cliff the deer looked down;
On wing of jet from his repose
In the deep heath the blackcock rose;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow;
And when the stony path began
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been passed before
They gained the height of Lammermoor;
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them at the close of day
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seemed large, though rude;
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the courtyard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamor fills the hall:
Weighing the labor with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze,
Might see where in dark nook aloof
The rafters of the sooty roof

Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savory haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand;
Nor wanted in that martial day
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle, Marmion sate,
And viewed around the blazing hearth
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

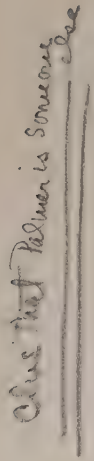
IV

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;

With open hand and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood,
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fixed on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.



VI

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whispered forth his mind:

'Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such sight?
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
Whene'er the firebrand's fickle light
  Glances beneath his cowl!
Full on our lord he sets his eye;
For his best palfrey would not I
  Endure that sullen scowl.'

VII

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quelled their hearts who saw
The ever-varying firelight show
That figure stern and face of woe,
  Now called upon a squire:
'Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
To speed the lingering night away?
  We slumber by the fire.'

VIII

'So please you,' thus the youth rejoined,
'Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustomed Constant's strains to hear.
The harp full deftly can he strike,
And wake the lover's lute alike;
To dear Saint Valentine no thrush
Sings livelier from a springtide bush,

No nightingale her lovelorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavished on rocks and billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture as I may,
To sing his favorite roundelay.'

IX

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad;
Such have I heard in Scottish land
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer
On Lowland plains the ripened ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listened and stood still
As it came softened up the hill,
And deemed it the lament of men
Who languished for their native glen,
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehanna's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumbered brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles in the strain
Recalled fair Scotland's hills again!

X

SONG

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted forever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

CHORUS

Eleu loro, etc. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted forever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

CHORUS

Eleu loro, etc. Never, O never!

XI

Where shall the traitor rest,
He the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin and leave her?

In the lost battle,
  Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
  With groans of the dying.

CHORUS

Eleu loro, etc. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
  O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
  Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonor sit
  By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it,—
  Never, O never!

CHORUS

Eleu loro, etc. Never, O never!

XII

It ceased, the melancholy sound,
And silence sunk on all around.
The air was sad; but sadder still
  It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plained as if disgrace and ill
  And shameful death were near.

The air was sad; but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear -

He drew his mantle past his face,
  Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space
  Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not; but I ween
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wished to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear for their scourge mean villains have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave!
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And smiling to Fitz-Eustace said:
'Is it not strange that, as ye sung,
Seemed in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul?
  Say, what may this portend?'
Then first the Palmer silence broke,—
The livelong day he had not spoke,—
  'The death of a dear friend.'

XIV

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity,
Marmion, whose soul could scantly brook
Even from his king a haughty look,
Whose accent of command controlled
In camps the boldest of the bold—
Thought, look, and utterance failed him now,
Fallen was his glance and flushed his brow;
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes vail their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV

Well might he falter!—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betrayed.
Not that he augured of the doom
Which on the living closed the tomb:
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid,
And wroth because in wild despair
She practised on the life of Clare,

Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave,
And deemed restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favorite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear;
Secure his pardon he might hold
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way
When the stern priests surprised their prey.
His train but deemed the favorite page
Was left behind to spare his age;
Or other, if they deemed, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard:
Woe to the vassal who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI

His conscience slept—he deemed her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But, wakened by her favorite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say
That fell so ominous and drear
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venomed throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betrayed and scorned,
All lovely on his soul returned;
Lovely as when at treacherous call
She left her convent's peaceful wall,

Crimsoned with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII

'Alas!' he thought, 'how changed that mien!
How changed these timid looks have been,
Since years of guilt and of disguise
Have steeled her brow and armed her eyes!
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks,
Fierce and unfeminine are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair,
And I the cause—for whom were given
Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven!—
Would,' thought he, as the picture grows,
'I on its stalk had left the rose!
Oh, why should man's success remove
The very charms that wake his love?—
Her convent's peaceful solitude
Is now a prison harsh and rude;
And, pent within the narrow cell,
How will her spirit chafe and swell!
How brook the stern monastic laws!
The penance how—and I the cause!—
Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse!'—
And twice he rose to cry, 'To horse!'
And twice his sovereign's mandate came,
Like damp upon a kindling flame;

And twice he thought, 'Gave I not charge
She should be safe, though not at large?
They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head.'

XVIII

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds whose contending sway
I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
Their host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And talkative took up the word:
'Ay, reverend pilgrim, you who stray
From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,
Full often learn the art to know
Of future weal or future woe,
By word, or sign, or star;
Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
If, knight-like, he despises fear,
Not far from hence—if fathers old
Aright our hamlet legend told.'
These broken words the menials move,—
For marvels still the vulgar love,—
And, Marmion giving license cold,
His tale the host thus gladly told:—

XIX

THE HOST'S TALE

'A clerk could tell what years have flown
Since Alexander filled our throne,—

Alex. III

Third monarch of that warlike name,—
And eke the time when here he came
To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
A braver never drew a sword;
A wiser never, at the hour
Of midnight, spoke the word of power;
The same whom ancient records call
The founder of the Goblin-Hall.
I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
Gave you that cavern to survey.
Of lofty roof and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies:
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,
There never toiled a mortal arm,
It all was wrought by word and charm;
And I have heard my grandsire say
That the wild clamor and affray
Of those dread artisans of hell,
Who labored under Hugo's spell,
Sounded as loud as ocean's war
Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX

'The king Lord Gifford's castle sought,
Deep laboring with uncertain thought.
Even then he mustered all his host,
To meet upon the western coast;
For Norse and Danish galleys plied
Their oars within the Firth of Clyde.

There floated Haco's banner trim
Above Norweyan warriors grim,
Savage of heart and large of limb,
Threatening both continent and isle,
Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
And tarried not his garb to change,
But, in his wizard habit strange,
Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight:
His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
His high and wrinkled forehead bore
A pointed cap, such as of yore
Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore;
His shoes were marked with cross and spell,
Upon his breast a pentacle;
His zone of virgin parchment thin,
Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
And in his hand he held prepared
A naked sword without a guard.

XXI

'Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had marked strange lines upon his face;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seemed and dim,
As one unused to upper day;
Even his own menials with dismay

Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly sire
In this unwonted wild attire;
Unwonted, for traditions run
He seldom thus beheld the sun.
"I know," he said,—his voice was hoarse,
And broken seemed its hollow force,—
"I know the cause, although untold,
Why the king seeks his vassal's hold:
Vainly from me my liege would know
His kingdom's future weal or woe;
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

XXII

"'Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking cloud,
Can read in fixed or wandering star
The issue of events afar,
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controlled.
Such late I summoned to my hall;
And though so potent was the call
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deemed a refuge from the spell,
Yet, obstinate in silence still,
The haughty demon mocks my skill.
But thou,—who little know'st thy might
As born upon that blessed night
When yawning graves and dying groan
Proclaimed hell's empire overthrown,—

With untaught valor shall compel
Response denied to magic spell."
"Gramercy!" quoth our monarch free,
"Place him but front to front with me,
And, by this good and honored brand,
The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,
Soothly I swear that, tide what tide,
The demon shall a buffet bide."
His bearing bold the wizard viewed,
And thus, well pleased, his speech renewed:
"There spoke the blood of Malcolm!—mark:
Forth pacing hence at midnight dark,
The rampart seek whose circling crown
Crests the ascent of yonder down:
A southern entrance shalt thou find;
There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
And trust thine elfin foe to see
In guise of thy worst enemy.
Couch then thy lance and spur thy steed—
Upon him! and Saint George to speed!
If he go down, thou soon shalt know
Whate'er these airy sprites can show;
If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
I am no warrant for thy life."

XXIII

'Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
Alone and armed, forth rode the king,
To that old camp's deserted round.
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound

Left hand the town,—the Pictish race
The trench, long since, in blood did trace;
The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;
But woe betide the wandering wight
That treads its circle in the night!
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career;
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps are entrance given.
The southernmost our monarch passed,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appeared the form of England's king,
Who then a thousand leagues afar,
In Palestine waged holy war:
Yet arms like England's did he wield;
Alike the leopards in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same.
Long afterwards did Scotland know
Fell Edward was her deadliest foe.

XXIV

'The vision made our monarch start,
But soon he manned his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;

Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor glance,
And razed the skin—a puny wound.
The king, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compelled the future war to show.
Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandished war-axe wield
And strike proud Haco from his car,
While around the shadowy kings
Denmark's grim ravens cowered their wings.
'Tis said that in that awful night
Remoter visions met his sight,
Foreshowing future conquest far,
When our sons' sons wage Northern war;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Reddened the midnight sky with fire,
And shouting crews her navy bore
Triumphant to the victor shore.
Such signs may learned clerks explain,
They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV

'The joyful king turned home again,
Headed his host, and quelled the Dane;

But yearly, when returned the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,
His wound must bleed and smart;
Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
"Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start."
Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,
King Alexander fills his grave,
Our Lady give him rest!
Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin Warrior doth wield
Upon the brown hill's breast,
And many a knight hath proved his chance
In the charmed ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped;
Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight and Gilbert Hay.—
Gentles, my tale is said.'

XXVI

The quaighs were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign:
And with their lord the squires retire,
The rest around the hostel fire
Their drowsy limbs recline;
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.

Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppressed with toil and ale, they snore;
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

XXVII

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
Scarce by the pale moonlight were seen
The foldings of his mantle green:
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream,
Of hawk or hound, or ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form with nodding plume;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew:

XXVIII

'Fitz-Eustace! rise,—I cannot rest;
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood;
The air must cool my feverish blood,
And fain would I ride forth to see
The scene of elfin chivalry.

Arise, and saddle me my steed;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves;
I would not that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale.'
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed arrayed,
While, whispering, thus the baron said:—

XXIX

'Didst never, good my youth, hear tell
That on the hour when I was born
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this elfin foe!
Blithe would I battle for the right
To ask one question at the sprite.—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring.'
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And marked him pace the village road,
And listened to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seemed, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel what the Church believed,—
Should, stirred by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Arrayed in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know
That passions in contending flow
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But patient waited till he heard
At distance, pricked to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed
Come townward rushing on;

First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village road,—
In other pace than forth he yode,
Returned Lord Marmion.
Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And in his haste wellnigh he fell;
To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew:
But yet the moonlight did betray
The falcon-crest was soiled with clay;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short; for still between
Would dreams of terror intervene:
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH

To James Skene, Esq.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest

AN AGED Minstrel sagely said,
'Where is the life which late we led?'
That motley clown in Arden wood,
Whom humorous Jaques with envy viewed,
Not even that clown could amplify
On this trite text so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell
Since we have known each other well,
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand;
And sure, through many a varied scene,
Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep marked, like all below,
With checkered shades of joy and woe,
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Marked cities lost and empires changed,
While here at home my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears
Fevered the progress of these years,

Yet now, days, weeks, and months but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now it scarcely seems a day
Since first I tuned this idle lay;
A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
Their vexed boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights and Ettrick Pen
Have donned their wintry shrouds again,
And mountain dark and flooded mead
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mixed with the rack, the snow mists fly;
The shepherd who, in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen,—
He who, outstretched the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
Viewed the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumbered o'er his tattered book,

Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessened tide,—
At midnight now the snowy plain
Finds sterner labor for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun
Through heavy vapors dank and dun,
When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail and sleeted rain
Against the casement's tinkling pane;
The sounds that drive wild deer and fox
To shelter in the brake and rocks
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain;
Till, dark above and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
Whistling and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid:
His flock he gathers and he guides
To open downs and mountain-sides,
Where fiercest though the tempest blow,
Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast that whistles o'er the fells
Stiffens his locks to icicles;

Oft he looks back while, streaming far,
His cottage window seems a star,—
Loses its feeble gleam,—and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep.
If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale;
His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
Close to the hut, no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,
The morn may find the stiffened swain:
The widow sees, at dawning pale,
His orphans raise their feeble wail;
And, close beside him in the snow,
Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
Couches upon his master's breast,
And licks his cheek to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
His healthy fare, his rural cot,
His summer couch by greenwood tree,
His rustic kirn's loud revelry,
His native hill-notes tuned on high
To Marion of the blithesome eye,
His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
And all Arcadia's golden creed?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
Of human life the varying scene?

Our youthful summer oft we see
Dance by on wings of game and glee,
While the dark storm reserves its rage
Against the winter of our age;
As he, the ancient chief of Troy,
His manhood spent in peace and joy,
But Grecian fires and loud alarms
Called ancient Priam forth to arms.
Then happy those, since each must drain
His share of pleasure, share of pain,—
Then happy those, beloved of Heaven,
To whom the mingled cup is given;
Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
Whose joys are chastened by their grief.
And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
When thou of late wert doomed to twine—
Just when thy bridal hour was by—
The cypress with the myrtle tie.
Just on thy bride her sire had smiled,
And blessed the union of his child,
When love must change its joyous cheer,
And wipe affection's filial tear.
Nor did the actions next his end
Speak more the father than the friend:
Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
The tribute to his minstrel's shade,
The tale of friendship scarce was told,
Ere the narrator's heart was cold—
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!

But not around his honored urn
Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
The thousand eyes his care had dried
Pour at his name a bitter tide,
And frequent falls the grateful dew
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,
Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
'The widow's shield, the orphan's stay.'
Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
My verse intrudes on this sad theme,
For sacred was the pen that wrote,
'Thy father's friend forget thou not';
And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave:—
'Tis little—but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
Recalls our summer walks again;
When, doing nought,—and, to speak true,
Not anxious to find aught to do,—
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And, desultory as our way,
Ranged unconfined from grave to gay.
Even when it flagged, as oft will chance,
No effort made to break its trance,

We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too;
Thou gravely laboring to portray
The blighted oak's fantastic spray,
I spelling o'er with much delight
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante by name, ycleped the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
Jealous each other's motions viewed,
And scarce suppressed their ancient feud.
The laverock whistled from the cloud;
The stream was lively, but not loud;
From the white thorn the May-flower shed
Its dewy fragrance round our head:
Not Ariel lived more merrily
Under the blossomed bough than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
When Winter stript the Summer's bowers.
Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
When fires were bright and lamps beamed gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay,
And he was held a laggard soul
Who shunned to quaff the sparkling bowl.
Then he whose absence we deplore,
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer missed, bewailed the more,

And thou, and I, and dear-loved R——
And one whose name I may not say,—
For not mimosa's tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,—
In merry chorus well combined,
With laughter drowned the whistling wind.
Mirth was within, and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
Not but amid the buxom scene
Some grave discourse might intervene—
Of the good horse that bore him best,
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest;
For, like mad Tom's, our chiefest care
Was horse to ride and weapon wear.
Such nights we've had; and, though the game
Of manhood be more sober tame,
And though the field-day or the drill
Seem less important now, yet still
Such may we hope to share again.
The sprightly thought inspires my strain!
And mark how, like a horseman true,
Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

CANTO FOURTH

THE CAMP

I

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
And with their light and lively call
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came and free of heart,
But soon their mood was changed;
Complaint was heard on every part
Of something disarranged.
Some clamored loud for armor lost;
Some brawled and wrangled with the host:
'By Becket's bones,' cried one, 'I fear
That some false Scot has stolen my spear!'
Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire,
Although the rated horseboy sware
Last night he dressed him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
'Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
Bevis lies dying in his stall;

To Marmion who the plight dare tell
Of the good steed he loves so well?'
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried,
'What else but evil could betide,—
With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush.'

II

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guessed,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous plaints suppressed;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
And did his tale display
Simply, as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvelled at the wonders told,—
Passed them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckoned with their Scottish host;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
'Ill thou deserv'st thy hire,' he said;

'Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!
I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land
To their infernal home;
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trampled to and fro.'
The laughing host looked on the hire:
'Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou com'st among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo.'
Here stayed their talk, for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journeyed all the morning-day.

IV

The greensward way was smooth and good,
Through Humbie's and through Saltoun's wood;
A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,
There narrower closed till overhead
A vaulted screen the branches made.
'A pleasant path,' Fitz-Eustace said;
'Such as where errant-knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry,

Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed.'
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind,
Perchance to show his lore designed;
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall-window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton or de Worde.
Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answered nought again.

V

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolonged by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far;
Each ready archer grasped his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band
Some opener ground to gain;

And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees receding showed
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang;
On prancing steeds they forward pressed,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore:
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came,
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, argent, or, and azure glowing,
Attendant on a king-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held
That feudal strife had often quelled
When wildest its alarms.

VII

He was a man of middle age,
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on king's errand come;

But in the glances of his eye
A penetrating, keen, and sly
  Expression found its home;
The flash of that satiric rage
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
  And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced;
His cap of maintenance was graced
  With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
  Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
  Embroidered round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
  First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
  And gallant unicorn.
So bright the king's armorial coat
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colors blazoned brave,
The Lion, which his title gave;
A train, which well beseemed his state,
But all unarmed, around him wait.
  Still is thy name in high account,
    And still thy verse has charms,
  Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
    Lord Lion King-at-arms!

VIII

Down from his horse did Marmion spring
Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
For well the stately baron knew
To him such courtesy was due
Whom royal James himself had crowned,
And on his temples placed the round
  Of Scotland's ancient diadem,
And wet his brow with hallowed wine,
And on his finger given to shine
  The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said:—
'Though Scotland's king hath deeply swore
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court,
Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name
And honors much his warlike fame,
My liege hath deemed it shame and lack
Of courtesy to turn him back;
And by his order I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide
Till finds King James meet time to see
The flower of English chivalry.'

IX

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may.

The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
  Sought to take leave in vain;
Strict was the Lion-King's command
That none who rode in Marmion's band
  Should sever from the train.
'England has here enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes:'
To Marchmount thus apart he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right-hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X

At length up that wild dale they wind,
  Where Crichtoun Castle crowns the bank;
For there the Lion's care assigned
  A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That castle rises on the steep
  Of the green vale of Tyne;
And far beneath, where slow they creep
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist and willows weep,
  You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose,
Their various architecture shows
  The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
  The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI

Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
  But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
  Thy turrets rude and tottered keep
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
  Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
  Scutcheons of honor or pretence,
Quartered in old armorial sort,
  Remains of rude magnificence.
Nor wholly yet hath time defaced
  Thy lordly gallery fair,
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
  Adorn thy ruined stair.
Still rises unimpaired below
The court-yard's graceful portico;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show
  Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go,
  To shield them from the storm.
And, shuddering, still may we explore,
  Where oft whilom were captives pent,
The darkness of thy Massy More,
  Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace in undulating line
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII

Another aspect Crichtoun showed
As through its portal Marmion rode;
But yet 'twas melancholy state
Received him at the outer gate,
For none were in the castle then
But women, boys, or aged men.
With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame
To welcome noble Marmion came;
Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
Proffered the baron's rein to hold;
For each man that could draw a sword
Had marched that morning with their lord,
Earl Adam Hepburn,—he who died
On Flodden by his sovereign's side.
Long may his lady look in vain!
She ne'er shall see his gallant train
Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
'Twas a brave race before the name
Of hated Bothwell stained their fame.

XIII

And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every right that honor claims,
Attended as the king's own guest;—
Such the command of Royal James,
Who marshalled then his land's array,
Upon the Borough-moor that lay.

Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.
Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
Oft cheer the baron's moodier fit;
And, in his turn, he knew to prize
Lord Marmion's powerful mind and wise,—
Trained in the lore of Rome and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

XIV

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walked,
And by the slowly fading light
Of varying topics talked;
And, unaware, the herald-bard
Said Marmion might his toil have spared
In travelling so far,
For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war;
And, closer questioned, thus he told
A tale which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enrolled:—

XV

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'S TALE

'Of all the palaces so fair
Built for the royal dwelling
In Scotland, far beyond compare
Linlithgow is excelling;
And in its park, in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild buck bells from ferny brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake,
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is to our sovereign dear
The heaviest month in all the year;
Too well his cause of grief you know,
June saw his father's overthrow.
Woe to the traitors who could bring
The princely boy against his king!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices as strict as Lent
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI

'When last this ruthful month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The king, as wont, was praying;
While for his royal father's soul

The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
  The bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain—
In Catherine's aisle the monarch knelt,
With sackcloth shirt and iron belt,
  And eyes with sorrow streaming;
Around him in their stalls of state
The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
  Their banners o'er them beaming.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafened with the jangling knell,
Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
  Through the stained casement gleaming;
But while I marked what next befell
  It seemed as I were dreaming.
Stepped from the crowd a ghostly wight,
In azure gown, with cincture white;
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
Now, mock me not when, good my lord,
I pledge to you my knightly word
That when I saw his placid grace,
His simple majesty of face,
His solemn bearing, and his pace
  So stately gliding on,—
Seemed to me ne'er did limner paint
So just an image of the saint
Who propped the Virgin in her faint,
  The loved Apostle John!

XVII

'He stepped before the monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bowed, nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice,—but never tone
So thrilled through vein, and nerve, and bone:—
"My mother sent me from afar,
Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
Woe waits on thine array;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warned, beware:
God keep thee as he may!"—
The wondering monarch seemed to seek
For answer, and found none;
And when he raised his head to speak,
The monitor was gone.
The marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward passed;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanished from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies.'

XVIII

While Lindesay told his marvel strange
The twilight was so pale,
He marked not Marmion's color change
While listening to the tale;
But, after a suspended pause,
The baron spoke: 'Of Nature's laws
So strong I held the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course,
And, three days since, had judged your aim
Was but to make your guest your game;
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught.'—He stayed,
And seemed to wish his words unsaid,
But, by that strong emotion pressed,
Which prompts us to unload our breast
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Nought of the Palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance or of Clare;
The thoughts which broke his sleep he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX

'In vain,' said he, 'to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couched my head;
  Fantastic thoughts returned,
And, by their wild dominion led,
  My heart within me burned.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reached the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I passed through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear,—
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

XX

Thus judging, for a little space
I listened ere I left the place,
  But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they serve me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
  A mounted champion rise.—
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight and mixed affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
  Have borne me as a knight;

But when this unexpected foe
Seemed starting from the gulf below,—
I care not though the truth I show,—
I trembled with affright;
And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

XXI

'Why need my tongue the issue tell?
We ran our course,—my charger fell;—
What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?
I rolled upon the plain.
High o'er my head with threatening hand
The spectre shook his naked brand,—
Yet did the worst remain:
My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
Not opening hell itself could blast
Their sight like what I saw!
Full on his face the moonbeam strook!—
A face could never be mistook!
I knew the stern vindictive look,
And held my breath for awe.
I saw the face of one who, fled
To foreign climes, has long been dead,—
I well believe the last;
For ne'er from visor raised did stare
A human warrior with a glare
So grimly and so ghast.

'Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade;'

Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade;
But when to good Saint George I prayed,—
The first time e'er I asked his aid,—
He plunged it in the sheath,
And, on his courser mounting light,
He seemed to vanish from my sight:
The moonbeam drooped, and deepest night
Sunk down upon the heath.—
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face that met me there,
Called by his hatred from the grave
To cumber upper air;
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy.'

XXII

Marvelled Sir David of the Mount;
Then, learned in story, gan recount
Such chance had happed of old,
When once, near Norham, there did fight
A spectre fell of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And trained him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
'And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers red with gore,

Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
And yet, whate'er such legends say
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold
These midnight terrors vain;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour
When guilt we meditate within
Or harbor unrepented sin.'—
Lord Marmion turned him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then pressed Sir David's hand,—
But nought, at length, in answer said;
And here their further converse stayed,
Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
Such was the king's command.

XXIII

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode;
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.

Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digression o'er,
Suffice it that their route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They passed the glen and scanty rill,
And climbed the opposing bank, until
They gained the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom and thorn and whin,
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,
While rose on breezes thin
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan
Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV

But different far the change has been,
Since Marmion from the crown
Of Blackford saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown:

Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,
  Upland, and dale, and down.
A thousand did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That checkered all the heath between
  The streamlet and the town,
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene
And tamed the glaring white with green:
In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the southern Redswire edge
To furthest Rosse's rocky ledge,
From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come,—
The horses' tramp and tinkling clank,
Where chiefs reviewed their vassal rank,
  And charger's shrilling neigh,—

And see the shifting lines advance,
While frequent flashed from shield and lance
The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare
To embers now the brands decayed
Where the night-watch their fires had made.
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugged to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omened gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII

Nor marked they less where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tailed, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pencil, bandrol, there
O'er the pavilions flew.
Highest and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide;

The staff, a pine-tree, strong and straight,
  Pitched deeply in a massive stone,
  Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight,
  Whene'er the western wind unrolled
  With toil the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where in proud Scotland's royal shield
  The ruddy lion ramped in gold.

XXIX

Lord Marmion viewed the landscape bright,—
He viewed it with a chief's delight,—
  Until within him burned his heart,
  And lightning from his eye did part,
    As on the battle-day;
  Such glance did falcon never dart
    When stooping on his prey.
'Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy king from warfare to dissuade
  Were but a vain essay;
For, by Saint George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal nor divine
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimmed their armor's shine
  In glorious battle-fray!'
Answered the bard, of milder mood:
'Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good
  That kings would think withal,

When peace and wealth their land has blessed,
'Tis better to sit still at rest
Than rise, perchance to fall.'

XXX

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stayed,
For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendor red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning-beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height
Where the huge castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw,
Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law;
And, broad between them rolled,

The gallant Firth the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
  Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
  And raised his bridle hand,
And making demi-volt in air,
Cried, 'Where's the coward that would not dare
  To fight for such a land!'
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see,
Nor Marmion's frown repressed his glee.

XXXI

Thus while they looked, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
  And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
  Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells distant chime
Merrily tolled the hour of prime,
  And thus the Lindesay spoke:
'Thus clamor still the war-notes when
The king to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to Saint Catherine's of Sienne,
  Or Chapel of Saint Rocque.

To you they speak of martial fame,
But me remind of peaceful game,
When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII

'Nor less,' he said, 'when looking forth
I view yon Empress of the North
Sit on her hilly throne,
Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers—
Nor less,' he said, 'I moan
To think what woe mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant king,
Or with their larum call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst Southern sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin's leaguered wall.—
But not for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure or cheaply bought!
Lord Marmion, I say nay:
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
But thou thyself shalt say,

When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
That England's dames must weep in bower,
  Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
  Led on by such a king.'
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,
  And there they make a stay.—
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing
Of Scotland's ancient court and king,
  In the succeeding lay.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH

To George Ellis, Esq.

Edinburgh

WHEN dark December glooms the day,
And takes our autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws
Upon the weary waste of snows
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard;
When sylvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang in idle trophy near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear;
When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound, with his length of limb,
And pointer, now employed no more,
Cumber our parlor's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemned to rest and feed;
When from our snow-encircled home
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice conned o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more,

And darkling politician, crossed,
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering housewife sore complains
Of carriers' snow-impeded wains;—
When such the country-cheer, I come
Well pleased to seek our city home;
For converse and for books to change
The Forest's melancholy range,
And welcome with renewed delight
The busy day and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
Lament the ravages of time,
As erst by Newark's riven towers,
And Ettrick stripped of forest bowers.
True, Caledonia's Queen is changed
Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent
By bulwark, line, and battlement,
And flanking towers and laky flood,
Guarded and garrisoned she stood,
Denying entrance or resort
Save at each tall embattled port,
Above whose arch, suspended, hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
That long is gone,—but not so long
Since, early closed and opening late,
Jealous revolved the studded gate,
Whose task, from eve to morning tide,
A wicket churlishly supplied.

Stern then and steel-girt was thy brow,
Dun-Edin! Oh, how altered now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sitt'st, like empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
For thy dark cloud, with umbered lower,
That hung o'er cliff and lake and tower,
Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day!

Not she the championess of old,
In Spenser's magic tale enrolled,
She for the charmed spear renowned,
Which forced each knight to kiss the ground,—
Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,
What time she was Malbecco's guest,
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When, from the corselet's grasp relieved,
Free to the sight her bosom heaved:
Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
Erst hidden by the aventayle,
And down her shoulders graceful rolled
Her locks profuse of paly gold.
They who whilom in midnight fight
Had marvelled at her matchless might,
No less her maiden charms approved,
But looking liked, and liking loved.
The sight could jealous pangs beguile,
And charm Malbecco's cares awhile;

And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,
Forgot his Columbella's claims,
And passion, erst unknown, could gain
The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;
Nor durst light Paridell advance,
Bold as he was, a looser glance.
She charmed, at once, and tamed the heart,
Incomparable Britomart!

So thou, fair City! disarrayed
Of battled wall and rampart's aid,
As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
Than in that panoply of war.
Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
Strength and security are flown;
Still as of yore, Queen of the North!
Still canst thou send thy children forth.
Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
Thy burghers rose to man thy wall
Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
Thy dauntless voluntary line;
For fosse and turret proud to stand,
Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
Thy thousands, trained to martial toil,
Full red would stain their native soil,
Ere from thy mural crown there fell
The slightest knosp or pinnacle.
And if it come, as come it may,
Dun-Edin! that eventful day,

Renowned for hospitable deed,
That virtue much with Heaven may plead,
In patriarchal times whose care
Descending angels deigned to share;
That claim may wrestle blessings down
On those who fight for the Good Town,
Destined in every age to be
Refuge of injured royalty;
Since first, when conquering York arose,
To Henry meek she gave repose,
Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
Great Bourbon's relics sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts!—for, as they rise,
How gladly I avert mine eyes,
Bodings, or true or false, to change
For Fiction's fair romantic range,
Or for Tradition's dubious light,
That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
Dazzling alternately and dim,
Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
Creation of my fantasy,
Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
And make of mists invading men.—
Who loves not more the night of June
Than dull December's gloomy noon?
The moonlight than the fog of frost?
And can we say which cheats the most?

But who shall teach my harp to gain
A sound of the romantic strain
Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
Could win the royal Henry's ear,
Famed Beauclerc called, for that he loved
The minstrel and his lay approved?
Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
Such notes as from the Breton tongue
Marie translated, Blondel sung?—
Oh! born Time's ravage to repair,
And make the dying Muse thy care
Who, when his scythe her hoary foe
Was poising for the final blow,
The weapon from his hand could wring,
And break his glass and shear his wing,
And bid, reviving in his strain,
The gentle poet live again;
Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
An unpedantic moral gay,
Nor less the dullest theme bid flit
On wings of unexpected wit;
In letters as in life approved,
Example honored and beloved,—
Dear Ellis! to the bard impart
A lesson of thy magic art,
To win at once the head and heart,—
At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
Be long thy pleasing task,—but, oh!
No more by thy example teach
What few can practise, all can preach,—
With even patience to endure
Lingering disease and painful cure,
And boast affliction's pangs subdued
By mild and manly fortitude.
Enough, the lesson has been given:
Forbid the repetition, Heaven!

Come listen, then! for thou hast known
And loved the Minstrel's varying tone,
Who, like his Border sires of old,
Waked a wild measure rude and bold,
Till Windsor's oaks and Ascot plain
With wonder heard the Northern strain.
Come listen! bold in thy applause,
The bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
And, as the ancient art could stain
Achievements on the storied pane,
Irregularly traced and planned,
But yet so glowing and so grand,
So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry.

CANTO FIFTH

THE COURT

I

THE train has left the hills of Braid;
The barrier guard have open made—
So Lindesay bade—the palisade
That closed the tented ground;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare,
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes;
Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
So huge that many simply thought
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought,
And little deemed their force to feel
Through links of mail and plates of steel
When, rattling upon Flodden vale,
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.

II

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron through,

And much he marvelled one small land
Could marshal forth such various band;
For men-at-arms were here,
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
Like iron towers for strength and weight,
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
With battle-axe and spear.
Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
Practised their chargers on the plain,
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,
Each warlike feat to show,
To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
And high curvet, that not in vain
The sword-sway might descend amain
On foeman's casque below.
He saw the hardy burghers there
March armed on foot with faces bare,
For visor they wore none,
Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
But burnished were their corselets bright,
Their brigantines and gorgets light
Like very silver shone.
Long pikes they had for standing fight,
Two-handed swords they wore,
And many wielded mace of weight,
And bucklers bright they bore.

III

On foot the yeoman too, but dressed
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,

With iron quilted well;
Each at his back—a slender store—
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal statutes tell.
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
A crossbow there, a hagbut here,
A dagger-knife, and brand.
Sober he seemed and sad of cheer,
As loath to leave his cottage dear
And march to foreign strand,
Or musing who would guide his steer
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie;
More dreadful far his ire
Than theirs who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valor like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

IV

Not so the Borderer—bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joyed to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;
Nor harp nor pipe his ear could please
Like the loud slogan yell.

On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-armed pricker plied his trade,—
  Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers, to guard their townships, bleed,
  But war's the Borderers' game.
Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
  O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarce caring who might win the day,
  Their booty was secure.
These, as Lord Marmion's train passed by,
Looked on at first with careless eye,
Nor marvelled aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow.
But when they saw the lord arrayed
In splendid arms and rich brocade,
Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
  'Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride?
Oh! could we but on Border side,
By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
  Beset a prize so fair!
That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
Might chance to lose his glistering hide;
Brown Maudlin of that doublet pied
  Could make a kirtle rare.'

V

Next, Marmion marked the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the chiefs their tribes arrayed,
And wild and garish semblance made
The checkered trews and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes brayed
To every varying clan.
Wild through their red or sable hair
Looked out their eyes with savage stare
On Marmion as he passed;
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And hardened to the blast;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undressed hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet decked their head;
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but, oh!
Short was the shaft and weak the bow
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.

They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamoring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mixed,
Grumbled and yelled the pipes betwixt.

VI

Thus through the Scottish camp they passed,
And reached the city gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Armed burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamped in field so near
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show;
At every turn with dinning clang
The armorer's anvil clashed and rang,
Or toiled the swarthy smith to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel,
Or axe or falchion to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street and lane and market-place,
  Bore lance or casque or sword;
While burghers, with important face,
  Described each new-come lord,
Discussed his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.

The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlooked the crowded street;
  There must the baron rest
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
  Such was the king's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich and costly wines
  To Marmion and his train;
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
  The palace halls they gain.

VII

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily
That night with wassail, mirth, and glee:
King James within her princely bower
Feasted the chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summoned to spend the parting hour;
For he had charged that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid monarch aye
  The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
  The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past;
It was his blithest—and his last.

The dazzling lamps from gallery gay
Cast on the court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing,
There ladies touched a softer string;
With long-eared cap and motley vest,
The licensed fool retailed his jest;
His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
  Nor courted them in vain;
For often in the parting hour
Victorious Love asserts his power
  O'er coldness and disdain;
And flinty is her heart can view
To battle march a lover true—
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
  Nor own her share of pain.

VIII

Through this mixed crowd of glee and game
The king to greet Lord Marmion came,
  While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know,
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doffed to Marmion bending low
  His broidered cap and plume.

For royal were his garb and mien:
His cloak of crimson velvet piled,
Trimmed with the fur of marten wild,
His vest of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave of old renown;
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldric bright;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was buttoned with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX

The monarch's form was middle size,
For feat of strength or exercise
Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye
His short curled beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And, oh! he had that merry glance
That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and sue,—

Suit lightly won and short-lived pain,
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
I said he joyed in banquet bower;
But, mid his mirth, 'twas often strange
How suddenly his cheer would change,
His look o'ercast and lower,
If in a sudden turn he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance pain,
In memory of his father slain.
Even so 'twas strange how evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
Forward he rushed with double glee
Into the stream of revelry.
Thus dim-seen object of affright
Startles the courser in his flight,
And half he halts, half springs aside,
But feels the quickening spur applied,
And, straining on the tightened rein,
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway;
To Scotland's court she came
To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
And with the king to make accord
Had sent his lovely dame.

Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay king allegiance own;
  For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquoise ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
  For her to break a lance,
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
  In English breezes dance.
And thus for France's queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest,
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost councils still to share,
And thus for both he madly planned
The ruin of himself and land!
  And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair nor France's queen
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
  From Margaret's eyes that fell,—
His own Queen Margaret, who in Lithgow's bower
All lonely sat and wept the weary hour.

XI

The queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
  And weeps the weary day
The war against her native soil,
Her monarch's risk in battle broil,—

And in gay Holy-Rood the while
Dame Heron rises with a smile
  Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
  The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touched and tuned them all,
Ever her bosom's rise and fall
  Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitched her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the king,
And then around the silent ring,
And laughed, and blushed, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by yea and nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft yet lively air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung:—

XII

LOCHINVAR

LADY HERON'S SONG

Oh! young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.

A soft yet lively air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung -

So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Esk river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,—
For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,—
'Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'—

'I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.'

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup,
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.

He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar,—
'Now tread we a measure!' said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, ''Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

One touch to her hand and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

XIII

The monarch o'er the siren hung,
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer and more near,
He whispered praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied,
And ladies winked and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seemed to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too
A real or feigned disdain:
Familiar was the look, and told
Marmion and she were friends of old.
The king observed their meeting eyes
With something like displeased surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad
Which Marmion's high commission showed:
'Our Borders sacked by many a raid,
Our peaceful liege-men robbed,' he said,
'On day of truce our warden slain,
Stout Barton killed, his vessels ta'en—
Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne.'

XIV

He paused, and led where Douglas stood
And with stern eye the pageant viewed;
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions led to die
On Lauder's dreary flat.
Princes and favorites long grew tame,
And trembled at the holy name
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;
The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,
Its dungeons and its towers,
Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,
To fix his princely bowers.
Though now in age he had laid down
His armor for the peaceful gown,
And for a staff his brand,
Yet often would flash forth the fire
That could in youth a monarch's ire
And minion's pride withstand;
And even that day at council board,
Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.

XV

His giant-form, like ruined tower,
Though fallen its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seemed o'er the gaudy scene to lower;
His locks and beard in silver grew,
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued:
'Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were and stern
To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.
Then rest you in Tantallon hold;
Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon o'er his towers displayed,
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose
More than to face his country's foes.
And, I bethink me, by Saint Stephen,
But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first fruits of the war,
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
A bevy of the maids of heaven.
Under your guard these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,

And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem for Cochran's soul may say.'
And with the slaughtered favorite's name
Across the monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

XVI

In answer nought could Angus speak,
His proud heart swelled well-nigh to break;
He turned aside, and down his cheek
A burning tear there stole.
His hand the monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook:
'Now, by the Bruce's soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,
I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true;
Forgive me, Douglas, once again.'—
And, while the king his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whispered to the king aside:
'Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed!

A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart;
But woe awaits a country when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye!'

XVII

Displeased was James that stranger viewed
And tampered with his changing mood.
'Laugh those that can, weep those that may,'
Thus did the fiery monarch say,
'Southward I march by break of day;
And if within Tantallon strong
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth in his castle-hall.'—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answered grave the royal vaunt,
'Much honored were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood,
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby Hills the paths are steep,
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,

And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's king shall cross the Trent:
Yet pause, brave prince, while yet you may!'—
The monarch lightly turned away,
And to his nobles loud did call,
'Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a hall!'
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out 'Blue Bonnets o'er the Border.'

XVIII

Leave we these revels now to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sailed again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide
Till James should of their fate decide,
And soon by his command
Were gently summoned to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honored, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.
The abbess told her chaplet o'er,
Nor knew which Saint she should implore;
For, when she thought of Constance, sore
She feared Lord Marmion's mood.
And judge what Clara must have felt!
The sword that hung in Marmion's belt
Had drunk De Wilton's blood.

Unwittingly King James had given,
As guard to Whitby's shades,
The man most dreaded under heaven
By these defenceless maids;
Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
Mid bustle of a war begun?
They deemed it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX

Their lodging, so the king assigned,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, joined;
And thus it fell that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the abbess' eye,
Who warned him by a scroll
She had a secret to reveal
That much concerned the Church's weal
And health of sinner's soul;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch and high
Above the stately street,
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX

At night in secret there they came,
The Palmer and the holy dame.

The moon among the clouds rode high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
  You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
  On Giles's steeple tall.
The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
  Were here wrapt deep in shade;
There on their brows the moonbeam broke,
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
  And on the casements played.
And other light was none to see,
  Save torches gliding far,
Before some chieftain of degree
Who left the royal revelry
  To bowne him for the war.—
A solemn scene the abbess chose,
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI

'O holy Palmer!' she began,—
'For sure he must be sainted man,
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,—
For his dear Church's sake, my tale
Attend, nor deem of light avail,

Though I must speak of worldly love,—
How vain to those who wed above!—
De Wilton and Lord Marmion wooed
Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood;—
Idle it were of Whitby's dame
To say of that same blood I came;—
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despiteously,
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart
When he came here on Simnel's part,
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
And down he threw his glove. The thing
Was tried, as wont, before the king;
Where frankly did De Wilton own
That Swart in Guelders he had known,
And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent;
But when his messenger returned,
Judge how De Wilton's fury burned!
For in his packet there were laid
Letters that claimed disloyal aid
And proved King Henry's cause betrayed.
His fame, thus blighted, in the field
He strove to clear by spear and shield;—
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above!

Perchance some form was unobserved,
Perchance in prayer or faith he swerved,
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII

'His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant doomed to suffer law,
Repentant, owned in vain
That while he had the scrolls in care
A stranger maiden, passing fair,
Had drenched him with a beverage rare;
His words no faith could gain.
With Clare alone he credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings fair
And die a vestal votaress there.
The impulse from the earth was given,
But bent her to the paths of heaven.
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
Ne'er sheltered her in Whitby's shade,
No, not since Saxon Edelfled;
Only one trace of earthly stain,
That for her lover's loss
She cherishes a sorrow vain,
And murmurs at the cross.—
And then her heritage:—it goes
Along the banks of Tame;

Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
In meadows rich the heifer lows,
The falconer and huntsman knows
  Its woodlands for the game.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble votaress here,
  Should do a deadly sin,
Her temple spoiled before mine eyes,
If this false Marmion such a prize
  By my consent should win;
Yet hath our boisterous monarch sworn
That Clare shall from our house be torn,
And grievous cause have I to fear
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII

'Now, prisoner, helpless, and betrayed
To evil power, I claim thine aid,
  By every step that thou hast trod
To holy shrine and grotto dim,
By every martyr's tortured limb,
By angel, saint, and seraphim,
  And by the Church of God!
For mark: when Wilton was betrayed,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas! that sinful maid
  By whom the deed was done,—
Oh! shame and horror to be said!
  She was—a perjured nun!

No clerk in all the land like her
Traced quaint and varying character.
Perchance you may a marvel deem,
  That Marmion's paramour—
For such vile thing she was—should scheme
  Her lover's nuptial hour;
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
As privy to his honor's stain,
  Illimitable power.
For this she secretly retained
  Each proof that might the plot reveal,
  Instructions with his hand and seal;
And thus Saint Hilda deigned,
  Through sinners' perfidy impure,
  Her house's glory to secure
  And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV

"'Twere long and needless here to tell
How to my hand these papers fell;
  With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her abbess true!
Who knows what outrage he might do
  While journeying by the way?—
O blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or by land or main,
  Deep penance may I pay!—

Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And oh! with cautious speed
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the king:
And for thy well-earned meed,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
A weekly mass shall still be thine
While priests can sing and read.—
What ail'st thou?—Speak!'—For as he took
The charge a strong emotion shook
His frame, and ere reply
They heard a faint yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown,
That on the breeze did die;
And loud the abbess shrieked in fear,
'Saint Withold, save us!—What is here!
Look at yon City Cross!
See on its battled tower appear
Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear
And blazoned banners toss!'—

XXV

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillared stone,
Rose on a turret octagon;—
But now is razed that monument,
Whence royal edict rang,
And voice of Scotland's law was sent
In glorious trumpet-clang.

Oh! be his tomb as lead to lead
Upon its dull destroyer's head!—
A minstrel's malison is said.—
Then on its battlements they saw
A vision, passing Nature's law,
  Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
Figures that seemed to rise and die,
Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
While nought confirmed could ear or eye
  Discern of sound or mien.
Yet darkly did it seem as there
Heralds and pursuivants prepare,
With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
  A summons to proclaim;
But indistinct the pageant proud,
As fancy forms of midnight cloud
When flings the moon upon her shroud
  A wavering tinge of flame;
It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
From midmost of the spectre crowd,
  This awful summons came:—

XXVI

'Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
  Whose names I now shall call,
Scottish or foreigner, give ear!
Subjects of him who sent me here,
At his tribunal to appear
  I summon one and all:

I cite you by each deadly sin
That e'er hath soiled your hearts within;
I cite you by each brutal lust
That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—
By wrath, by pride, by fear,
By each o'ermastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave and dying groan!
When forty days are passed and gone,
I cite you, at your monarch's throne
To answer and appear.'—
Then thundered forth a roll of names:—
The first was thine, unhappy James!
Then all thy nobles came;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
Why should I tell their separate style?
Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Foredoomed to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name;
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did say,—
But then another spoke:
'Thy fatal summons I deny
And thine infernal lord defy,
Appealing me to Him on high
Who burst the sinner's yoke.'

At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream.
The summoner was gone.
Prone on her face the abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell;
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.
She marked not, at the scene aghast,
What time or how the Palmer passed.

XXVII

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move;
Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love
To pray the prayer and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The gray-haired sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair.—
Where is the Palmer now? and where
The abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
They journey in thy charge:
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
The Palmer still was with the band;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command
That none should roam at large.
But in that Palmer's altered mien
A wondrous change might now be seen;
Freely he spoke of war,

Of marvels wrought by single hand
When lifted for a native land,
And still looked high, as if he planned
  Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frock,
Would first his metal bold provoke,
  Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
  A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII

Some half-hour's march behind there came,
  By Eustace governed fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's dame,
  With all her nuns and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
  Ever he feared to aggravate
  Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
  To wait till, from the nuns removed,
  The influence of kinsmen loved,
  And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fanned by looks and sighs
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He longed to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land:

Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest, by that meanness won
He almost loathed to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause
Which made him burst through honor's laws.
If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX

And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause awhile
Before a venerable pile
Whose turrets viewed afar
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.
At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable dame,
And prayed Saint Hilda's abbess rest
With her, a loved and honored guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the abbess, you may guess,
And thanked the Scottish prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that passed between.
O'erjoyed the nuns their palfreys leave;

But when fair Clara did intend,
Like them, from horseback to descend,
  Fitz-Eustace said: 'I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part;—
  Think not discourtesy,
But lords' commands must be obeyed,
And Marmion and the Douglas said
  That you must wend with me.
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish earl he showed,
Commanding that beneath his care
Without delay you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.'

XXX

The startled abbess loud exclaimed;
But she at whom the blow was aimed
Grew pale as death and cold as lead,—
She deemed she heard her death-doom read.
'Cheer thee, my child!' the abbess said,
'They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armed band.'—
  'Nay, holy mother, nay,'
Fitz-Eustace said, 'the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus' care,
  In Scotland while we stay;
And when we move an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,

The startled abbess loud exclaimed;

Female attendance to provide
  Befitting Gloster's heir;
Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
  To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy
  That e'en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her safe and free
  Within her kinsman's halls.'
He spoke, and blushed with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
  And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaimed
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
  Entreated, threatened, grieved,
To martyr, saint, and prophet prayed,
Against Lord Marmion inveighed,
And called the prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistertian shook:
'The Douglas and the king,' she said,
'In their commands will be obeyed;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
The maiden in Tantallon Hall.'

XXXI

The abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—

For much of state she had,—
Composed her veil, and raised her head,
And 'Bid,' in solemn voice she said,
'Thy master, bold and bad,
The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written see
That one of his own ancestry
Drove the monks forth of Coventry,
Bid him his fate explore!
Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
His charger hurled him to the dust,
And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.
God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
He is a chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse,
Yet oft in holy writ we see
Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise;
For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
The mighty in his sin,
And Jael thus, and Deborah'—
Here hasty Blount broke in:
'Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band;
Saint Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand
All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
To hear the lady preach?
By this good light! if thus we stay,
Lord Marmion for our fond delay
Will sharper sermon teach.

Come, don thy cap and mount thy horse;
The dame must patience take perforce.'

XXXII

'Submit we then to force,' said Clare,
'But let this barbarous lord despair
His purposed aim to win;
Let him take living, land, and life,
But to be Marmion's wedded wife
In me were deadly sin:
And if it be the king's decree
That I must find no sanctuary
In that inviolable dome
Where even a homicide might come
And safely rest his head,
Though at its open portals stood,
Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
The kinsmen of the dead;
Yet one asylum is my own
Against the dreaded hour,—
A low, a silent, and a lone,
Where kings have little power.
One victim is before me there.—
Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
Remember your unhappy Clare!'
Loud weeps the abbess, and bestows
Kind blessings many a one;
Weeping and wailing loud arose,
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
Of every simple nun.

His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And by each courteous word and deed
To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they passed,
And, sudden, close before them showed
His towers Tantallon vast,
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war.
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows,
The fourth did battled walls enclose
And double mound and fosse.
By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square;
Around were lodgings fit and fair,
And towers of various form,
Which on the court projected far
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence oft the warder could descry
The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV

Here did they rest.—The princely care
Of Douglas why should I declare?
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,
Which varying to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts or fleeter fame,
With every varying day?
And, first, they heard King James had won
Etall, and Wark, and Ford; and then
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvelled Marmion,
And Douglas hoped his monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland;
But whispered news there came,
That while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame.
Such acts to chronicles I yield;
Go seek them there and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history.—
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gathered in the Southern land,

And marched into Northumberland,
  And camp at Wooler ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
  Began to chafe and swear:—
'A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
  When such a field is near.
Needs must I see this battle-day;
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought and Marmion away!
  The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
  Hath bated of his courtesy;
No longer in his halls I'll stay':
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH

To Richard Heber, Esq.

Mertoun House, Christmas

HEAP on more wood!—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol more deep the mead did drain,
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer,
Caroused in seas of sable beer,
While round in brutal jest were thrown
The half-gnawed rib and marrowbone,
Or listened all in grim delight
While scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth in frenzy would they hie,
While wildly loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honor to the holy night;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung,
On Christmas eve the mass was sung:
That only night in all the year
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merrymen go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of 'post and pair.'
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;

The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's-head frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell
How, when, and where, the monster fell,
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plum-porridge stood and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce
At such high tide her savory goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But oh! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.

'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger in our northern clime
Some remnants of the good old time,
And still within our valleys here
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetched claim
To Southron ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus my Christmas still I hold
Where my great-grandsire came of old,
With amber beard and flaxen hair
And reverend apostolic air,
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitched into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast
That he was loyal to his cost,
The banished race of kings revered,
And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
Is with fair liberty combined,

Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame that rules the land,
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer
Speed on their wings the passing year.
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
As loathe to leave the sweet domain,
And holds his mirror to her face,
And clips her with a close embrace:—
Gladly as he we seek the dome,
And as reluctant turn us home.

How just that at this time of glee
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
For many a merry hour we've known,
And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.
Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
And leave these classic tomes in peace!
Of Roman and of Grecian lore
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
'Were pretty fellows in their day,'
But time and tide o'er all prevail—
On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
Of wonder and of war—'Profane!
What! leave the lofty Latian strain,

Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
To hear the clash of rusty arms;
In Fairy-land or Limbo lost,
To jostle conjurer and ghost,
Goblin and witch!'— Nay, Heber dear,
Before you touch my charter, hear;
Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
My cause with many-languaged lore,
This may I say:—in realms of death
Ulysses meets Alcides' wraith,
Æneas upon Thracia's shore
The ghost of murdered Polydore;
For omens, we in Livy cross
At every turn *locutus Bos*.
As grave and duly speaks that ox
As if he told the price of stocks,
Or held in Rome republican
The place of Common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
Their legends wild of woe and fear.
To Cambria look—the peasant see
Bethink him of Glendowerdy
And shun 'the Spirit's Blasted Tree.'—
The Highlander, whose red claymore
The battle turned on Maida's shore,
Will on a Friday morn look pale,
If asked to tell a fairy tale:
He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
Who leaves that day his grassy ring;

Invisible to human ken,
He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
Beneath the towers of Franchémont,
Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
A mighty treasure buried lay,
Amassed through rapine and through wrong
By the last Lord of Franchémont.
The iron chest is bolted hard,
A huntsman sits its constant guard;
Around his neck his horn is hung,
His hanger in his belt is slung;
Before his feet his bloodhounds lie:
An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
As true a huntsman doth he look
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
Or ever hallooed to a hound.
To chase the fiend and win the prize
In that same dungeon ever tries
An aged necromantic priest;
It is an hundred years at least
Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
And neither yet has lost nor won.
And oft the conjurer's words will make
The stubborn demon groan and quake;
And oft the bands of iron break,

Or bursts one lock that still amain,
Fast as 'tis opened, shuts again.
That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the adept shall learn to tell
The very word that clenched the spell
When Franch'mont locked the treasure cell.
An hundred years are passed and gone,
And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie say,
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from heaven
That warned, in Lithgow, Scotland's king,
Nor less the infernal summoning;
May pass the Monk of Durham's tale,
Whose demon fought in Gothic mail;
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
But why such instances to you,
Who in an instant can renew
Your treasured hoards of various lore,
And furnish twenty thousand more?
Hoards, not like theirs whose volumes rest
Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest,
While gripple owners still refuse
To others what they cannot use;
Give them the priest's whole century,
They shall not spell you letters three,—

Their pleasure in the books the same
The magpie takes in pilfered gem.
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart;
Yet who, of all who thus employ them,
Can like the owner's self enjoy them?—
But, hark! I hear the distant drum!
The day of Flodden Field is come,—
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
And store of literary wealth.

CANTO SIXTH

THE BATTLE

I

WHILE great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanor, changed and cold,
Of Douglas fretted Marmion bold,
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuffed the battle from afar,
And hopes were none that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's king in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day,—
While these things were, the mournful Clare
Did in the Dame's devotions share;
For the good countess ceaseless prayed
To Heaven and saints her sons to aid,
And with short interval did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified:
Yet, as Lord Marmion nothing pressed,
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthened prayer,

Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II

I said Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repelled the insult of the air,
Which, when the tempest vexed the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
Above the rest a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access, where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign.
Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement;
The billows burst in ceaseless flow
Upon the precipice below.

Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works and walls were strongly manned;
No need upon the sea-girt side:
The steepy rock and frantic tide
Approach of human step denied,
And thus these lines and ramparts rude
Were left in deepest solitude.

III

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry,
Or slow, like noontide ghost, would glide
Along the dark-gray bulwark's side,
And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.
Oft did the cliff and swelling main
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
A home she ne'er might see again;
For she had laid adown,
So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
And frontlet of the cloister pale,
And Benedictine gown:
It were unseemly sight, he said,
A novice out of convent shade.—
Now her bright locks with sunny glow
Again adorned her brow of snow;
Her mantle rich, whose borders round

A deep and fretted broidery bound,
In golden foldings sought the ground;
Of holy ornament, alone
Remained a cross with ruby stone;
And often did she look
On that which in her hand she bore,
With velvet bound and broidered o'er,
Her breviary book.
In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale or twilight dim,
It fearful would have been
To meet a form so richly dressed,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,
And such a woful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practise on the gull and crow,
Saw her at distance gliding slow,
And did by Mary swear
Some lovelorn fay she might have been,
Or in romance some spell-bound queen,
For ne'er in work-day world was seen
A form so witching fair.

IV

Once walking thus at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And sighing thought—'The abbess there
Perchance does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty free
Walks hand in hand with Charity,

Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery,—
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
Oh! wherefore to my duller eye
Did still the saint her form deny?
Was it that, seared by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low
With him that taught them first to glow?
Yet gentle abbess, well I knew
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command
That ruled thy simple maiden band.
How different now, condemned to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride!—
But Marmion has to learn ere long
That constant mind and hate of wrong
Descended to a feeble girl
From Red de Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
Of such a stem a sapling weak,
He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V

'But see!—what makes this armor here?'—
For in her path there lay
Targe, corselet, helm;—she viewed them near.—

'The breastplate pierced!—Ay, much I fear,
Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
That hath made fatal entrance here,
As these dark blood-gouts say.—
Thus Wilton!—Oh! not corselet's ward,
Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
Could be thy manly bosom's guard
On yon disastrous day!'—
She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
Wilton himself before her stood!
It might have seemed his passing ghost,
For every youthful grace was lost,
And joy unwonted and surprise
Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
Expect not, noble dames and lords,
That I can tell such scene in words:
What skilful limner e'er would choose
To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
Unless to mortal it were given
To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
Far less can my weak line declare
Each changing passion's shade:
Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy with her angelic air,
And hope that paints the future fair,
Their varying hues displayed;
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,

Till all fatigued the conflict yield,
And mighty love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delayed,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply:—

VI

DE WILTON'S HISTORY

'Forget we that disastrous day
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragged,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled,—
I found me on a pallet low
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials and friends and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care
When sense returned to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,

If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a palmer's weeds arrayed,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journeyed many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason feared,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes upreared.
My friend at length fell sick, and said
God would remove him soon;
And while upon his dying bed
He begged of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquered lie,
Even then my mercy should awake
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII

'Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perished of my wound,—
None cared which tale was true;

And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his palmer's dress,
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimmed my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide
That I should be that baron's guide—
I will not name his name!—
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame!
And ne'er the time shall I forget
When, in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange:
What were his thoughts I cannot tell,
But in my bosom mustered Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII

'A word of vulgar augury
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale,
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrowed steed and mail
And weapons from his sleeping band;
And, passing from a postern door,
We met and 'countered, hand to hand,—
He fell on Gifford-moor.

For the death-stroke my brand I drew,—
Oh! then my helmed head he knew,
The palmer's cowl was gone,—
Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
My hand the thought of Austin stayed;
I left him there alone.—
O good old man! even from the grave
Thy spirit could thy master save:
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
Had Whitby's abbess in her fear
Given to my hand this packet dear,
Of power to clear my injured fame
And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
Perchance you heard the abbess tell
Of the strange pageantry of hell
That broke our secret speech—
It rose from the infernal shade,
Or featly was some juggle played,
A tale of peace to teach.
Appeal to Heaven I judged was best
When my name came among the rest.

IX

'Now here within Tantallon hold
To Douglas late my tale I told,
To whom my house was known of old.
Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
This eve anew shall dub me knight.

These were the arms that once did turn
The tide of fight on Otterburne,
And Harry Hotspur forced to yield
When the Dead Douglas won the field.
These Angus gave—his armorer's care
Ere morn shall every breach repair;
For nought, he said, was in his halls
But ancient armor on the walls,
And aged chargers in the stalls,
And women, priests, and gray-haired men;
The rest were all in Twisel glen.
And now I watch my armor here,
By law of arms, till midnight's near;
Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X

'There soon again we meet, my Clare!
This baron means to guide thee there:
Douglas reveres his king's command,
Else would he take thee from his band.
And there thy kinsman Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.
Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs and strung by toil,
Once more'—'O Wilton! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,
Trust fate of arms once more?
And is there not an humble glen
Where we, content and poor,

Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
  Thy task on dale and moor?—
That reddening brow!—too well I know
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow
  While falsehood stains thy name:
Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know
  And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
  And send thee forth to fame!'

XI

That night upon the rocks and bay
The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
And poured its silver light and pure
Through loophole and through embrasure
  Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride
  The sober glances fall.
Much was there need; though seamed with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
  Though two gray priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
  The chapel's carving fair.

Amid that dim and smoky light,
Checkering the silvery moonshine bright,
A bishop by the altar stood,
A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen and rochet white.
Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy;
More pleased that in a barbarous age
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doffed his furred gown and sable hood;
O'er his huge form and visage pale
He wore a cap and shirt of mail,
And leaned his large and wrinkled hand
Upon the huge and sweeping brand
Which wont of yore in battle fray
His foeman's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.
He seemed as, from the tombs around
Rising at judgment-day,
Some giant Douglas may be found
In all his old array;
So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;

And think what next he must have felt
At buckling of the falchion belt!
And judge how Clara changed her hue
While fastening to her lover's side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue!
Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
'Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
For king, for church, for lady fair,
See that thou fight.'
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said: 'Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,
Disgrace, and trouble;
For He who honor best bestows
May give thee double.'
De Wilton sobbed, for sob he must:
'Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother!'
'Nay, nay,' old Angus said, 'not so;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field;
And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely—do thy worst,
And foul fall him that blenches first!'

XIII

Not far advanced was morning day
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe-conduct for his band
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide.
The ancient earl with stately grace
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whispered in an undertone,
'Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown.'
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopped to bid adieu:
'Though something I might plain,' he said,
'Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your king's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I stayed,
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble earl, receive my hand.'—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:—
'My manors, halls, and bowers shall still
Be open at my sovereign's will
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my king's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own,

And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.'

XIV

Burned Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—'This to me!' he said,
'An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And first I tell thee, haughty peer,
He who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate;
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,—
Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,—
I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
And if thou saidst I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!'
On the earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—'And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?

And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall.'—
Lord Marmion turned,—well was his need,—
And dashed the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung;
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars descending razed his plume.

XV

The steed along the drawbridge flies
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Not lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
'Horse! horse!' the Douglas cried, 'and chase!'
But soon he reined his fury's pace:
'A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed?
At first in heart it liked me ill
When the king praised his clerkly skill.

Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line;
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
'Tis pity of him too,' he cried:
'Bold can he speak and fairly ride,
I warrant him a warrior tried.'
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They crossed the heights of Stanrig-moor.
His troop more closely there he scanned,
And missed the Palmer from the band.
'Palmer or not,' young Blount did say,
'He parted at the peep of day;
Good sooth, it was in strange array.'
'In what array?' said Marmion quick.
'My lord, I ill can spell the trick;
But all night long with clink and bang
Close to my couch did hammers clang;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loophole while I peep,
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the keep,

Wrapped in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work
Against the Saracen and Turk:
Last night it hung not in the hall;
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the earl's best steed,
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say
The earl did much the Master pray
To use him on the battle-day;
But he preferred'—'Nay, Henry, cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray,
What did Blount see at break of day?'—

XVII

'In brief, my lord, we both descried—
For then I stood by Henry's side—
The Palmer mount and outwards ride
  Upon the earl's own favorite steed.
All sheathed he was in armor bright,
And much resembled that same knight
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight;
  Lord Angus wished him speed.'—

The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke:—
'Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!'
He muttered; ''Twas nor fay nor ghost
I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mould.—
O dotage blind and gross!
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross.—
How stand we now?—he told his tale
To Douglas, and with some avail;
'Twas therefore gloomed his rugged brow.—
Will Surrey dare to entertain
'Gainst Marmion charge disproved and vain?
Small risk of that, I trow.
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun,
Must separate Constance from the nun—
Oh! what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive!
A Palmer too!—no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye;
I might have known there was but one
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion.'

XVIII

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reached at eve the Tweed,

When Lennel's convent closed their march.—
There now is left but one frail arch,
  Yet mourn thou not its cells;
Our time a fair exchange has made:
Hard by, in hospitable shade,
  A reverend pilgrim dwells,
Well worth the whole Bernardine brood
That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.—
Yet did Saint Bernard's abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the baron climbed the tower,
To view afar the Scottish power,
  Encamped on Flodden edge;
The white pavilions made a show
Like remnants of the winter snow
  Along the dusky ridge.
Long Marmion looked:—at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
  Amid the shifting lines;
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
  The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending,
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know
They watched the motions of some foe
Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
And heedful watched them as they crossed
The Till by Twisel Bridge.
High sight it is and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the caverned cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing
Upon the eastern bank you see;
Still pouring down the rocky den
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,

Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

XX

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
  Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
  His host Lord Surrey lead?
What vails the vain knight-errant's brand?—
O Douglas, for thy leading wand!
  Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
Oh! for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skilled Bruce, to rule the fight
And cry, 'Saint Andrew and our right!'
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!—
The precious hour has passed in vain,
And England's host has gained the plain,
Wheeling their march and circling still
Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
'Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon! Hap what hap,
My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!—
Yet more! yet more!—how fair arrayed
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by!
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armor flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly.'—
'Stint in thy prate,' quoth Blount, 'thou'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest.'—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,
'This instant be our band arrayed;
The river must be quickly crossed,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James,—as well I trust
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry while the battle joins.'

XXII

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the abbot bade adieu,
Far less would listen to his prayer
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And muttered as the flood they view,
'The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw;
Lord Angus may the abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me.'
Then on that dangerous ford and deep
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep
He ventured desperately:
And not a moment will he bide
Till squire or groom before him ride;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven perforce,
The southern bank they gain.
Behind them straggling came to shore,
As best they might, the train:
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharmed, should sharply ring.

A moment then Lord Marmion stayed,
And breathed his steed, his men arrayed,
  Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a cross of stone,
That on a hillock standing lone
  Did all the field command.

XXIII

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host for deadly fray;
Their marshalled lines stretched east and west,
  And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation passed
  From the loud cannon mouth,
Not in the close successive rattle
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
  But slow and far between.
The hillock gained, Lord Marmion stayed:
'Here, by this cross,' he gently said,
  'You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
Oh! think of Marmion in thy prayer!—
Thou wilt not?—well, no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
  With ten picked archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
  To Berwick speed amain.—

But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again.'
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire, but spurred amain,
And, dashing through the battle-plain,
His way to Surrey took.

XXIV

'The good Lord Marmion, by my life!
Welcome to danger's hour!—
Short greeting serves in time of strife.—
Thus have I ranged my power:
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vaward post,
With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight;
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rearward of the fight,
And succor those that need it most.
Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee their charge will blithely share;
There fight thine own retainers too
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true.'

'Thanks, noble Surrey!' Marmion said,
Nor further greeting there he paid,
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of 'Marmion! Marmion!' that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill,
On which—for far the day was spent—
The western sunbeams now were bent;
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
'Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
But see! look up—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent.'
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke,
Volumed and vast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war
As down the hill they broke;

Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
  At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
  King James did rushing come.
Scarce could they hear or see their foes
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway and with lance's thrust;
  And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
  And fiends in upper air;
Oh! life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
  And triumph and despair.
Long looked the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

XXVI

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And first the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears,
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white seamew.
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,

And plumed crests of chieftains brave
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook and falchions flashed amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly;
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bare them bravely in the fight,
Although against them come
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly and with Home.

XXVII

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle,
Though there the western mountaineer
Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied.
'Twas vain.—But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile cheered Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;

Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It wavered mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
'By heaven and all its saints! I swear
I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host.'
And to the fray he rode amain,
Followed by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made for a space an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree rooted from the ground
It sank among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too,—yet stayed,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,

Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rushed by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:
Perchance her reason stoops or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scattered van of England wheels;—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roared, 'Is Wilton there?'—
They fly, or, maddened by despair,
Fight but to die,—'Is Wilton there?'
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drenched with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strained the broken brand;
His arms were smeared with blood and sand.
Dragged from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield and helmet beat,
The falcon crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .

Young Blount his armor did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
  Said, 'By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head!
  Good-night to Marmion.'—
'Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes,' said Eustace; 'peace!'

XXIX

When, doffed his casque, he felt free air,
Around gan Marmion wildly stare:
'Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
Redeem my pennon,—charge again!
Cry, "Marmion to the rescue!"—Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
  To Dacre bear my signet-ring;
  Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie:
  Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
  His lifeblood stains the spotless shield;
  Edmund is down; my life is reft;
  The Admiral alone is left.
  Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
  With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
  Full upon Scotland's central host,
  Or victory and England's lost.—

Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!—
Leave Marmion here alone—to die.'
They parted, and alone he lay;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmured, 'Is there none
Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst!'

XXX

O Woman! in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When with the baron's casque the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran:
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stooped her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain's side
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.

Where shall she turn?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink, weary, pilgrim, drink, and pray,
For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey,
Who built this cross and well.
She filled the helm and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A monk supporting Marmion's head;
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrive the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stooped his brow to lave—
'Is it the hand of Clare,' he said,
'Or injured Constance, bathes my head?'
Then, as remembrance rose,—
'Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!'—
'Alas!' she said, 'the while,—
Oh! think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She—died at Holy Isle.'—

Lord Marmion started from the ground
As light as if he felt no wound,
Though in the action burst the tide
In torrents from his wounded side.
'Then it was truth,' he said—'I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand.'
Then fainting down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling monk.

XXXII

With fruitless labor Clara bound
And strove to stanch the gushing wound;
The monk with unavailing cares
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear;
For that she ever sung,

He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted 'Victory!-'

'In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!'
So the notes rung.—
'Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—
Oh! look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
Oh! think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this.'—
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
And 'Stanley!' was the cry.—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye;
With dying hand above his head
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted 'Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!'
Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots around their king,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,
Where Huntly, and where Home?—

Oh! for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!
Such blasts might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side
Afar the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils and bleeds and dies
Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sibyl's Cross the plunderers stray.—
'O lady,' cried the monk, 'away!'
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV

But as they left the darkening heath
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hailed,
In headlong charge their horse assailed;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep

To break the Scottish circle deep
That fought around their king.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though billmen ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well,
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shattered bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves from wasted lands
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field, as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band
Disordered through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;

To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song
Shall many an age that wail prolong;
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife and carnage drear
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear
And broken was her shield!

XXXV

Day dawns upon the mountain's side.—
There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one;
The sad survivors all are gone.—
View not that corpse mistrustfully,
Defaced and mangled though it be;
Nor to yon Border castle high
Look northward with upbraiding eye;
Nor cherish hope in vain
That, journeying far on foreign strand,
The Royal Pilgrim to his land
May yet return again.
He saw the wreck his rashness wrought;
Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain:
And well in death his trusty brand,
Firm clenched within his manly hand,
Beseemed the monarch slain.

But oh! how changed since yon blithe night!—
Gladly I turn me from the sight
Unto my tale again.

XXXVI

Short is my tale:—Fitz-Eustace' care
A pierced and mangled body bare
To moated Lichfield's lofty pile;
And there, beneath the southern aisle,
A tomb with Gothic sculpture fair
Did long Lord Marmion's image bear.—
Now vainly for its site you look;
'Twas levelled when fanatic Brook
The fair cathedral stormed and took,
But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint Chad,
A guerdon meet the spoiler had!—
There erst was martial Marmion found,
His feet upon a couchant hound,
His hands to heaven upraised;
And all around, on scutcheon rich,
And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
His arms and feats were blazed.
And yet, though all was carved so fair,
And priest for Marmion breathed the prayer,
The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
From Ettrick woods a peasant swain
Followed his lord to Flodden plain,—
One of those flowers whom plaintive lay
In Scotland mourns as 'wede away':

Sore wounded, Sibyl's Cross he spied,
And dragged him to its foot, and died
Close by the noble Marmion's side.
The spoilers stripped and gashed the slain,
And thus their corpses were mista'en;
And thus in the proud baron's tomb
The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII

Less easy task it were to show
Lord Marmion's nameless grave and low.
They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
But every mark is gone:
Time's wasting hand has done away
The simple Cross of Sibyl Grey,
And broke her font of stone;
But yet from out the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet still.
Oft halts the stranger there,
For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry;
And shepherd boys repair
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel bush,
And plait their garlands fair.
Nor dream they sit upon the grave
That holds the bones of Marmion brave.—
When thou shalt find the little hill,
With thy heart commune and be still.

If ever in temptation strong
Thou left'st the right path for the wrong,
If every devious step thus trod
Still led thee further from the road,
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
But say, 'He died a gallant knight,
With sword in hand, for England's right.'

XXXVIII

I do not rhyme to that dull elf
Who cannot image to himself
That all through Flodden's dismal night
Wilton was foremost in the fight,
That when brave Surrey's steed was slain
'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hewed
Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood:
Unnamed by Holinshed or Hall,
He was the living soul of all;
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again,
And charged his old paternal shield
With bearings won on Flodden Field.
Nor sing I to that simple maid
To whom it must in terms be said
That king and kinsmen did agree
To bless fair Clara's constancy;
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state,—

That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
More, Sands, and Denny, passed the joke;
That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
And Katherine's hand the stocking threw;
And afterwards, for many a day,
That it was held enough to say,
In blessing to a wedded pair,
'Love they like Wilton and like Clare!'

L'ENVOY

TO THE READER

WHY then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentles speed,
Who long have listed to my rede?
To statesmen grave, if such may deign
To read the minstrel's idle strain,
Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
And patriotic heart—as Pitt!
A garland for the hero's crest,
And twined by her he loves the best!
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true?
And knowledge to the studious sage,
And pillow soft to head of age!

To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light.

NOTES

I. THE TEXT

The text of this edition of *Marmion* is based on that of the original manuscript of the poem and that of the first edition, published on the 23d of February, 1808, by John Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh,[1] with a few variants taken from Lockhart's revision of the edition of 1830, Black's *Author's Edition* and Chambers's *People's Edition*. Subjoined is a selection from many changes which Scott made on the original manuscript of the poem. These reveal something of Scott's literary artistry and craftsmanship; they also show the absurdity of the oft-repeated claim that Scott, like Shakespeare, "never blotted a line." The printed text, when compared with the original manuscript, reveals as many and as significant alterations as we find in the earlier and later texts of Wordsworth's or Tennyson's poems.

On the following pages is a facsimile of the original manuscript of one of the most interesting stanzas of Canto Fourth, where the reader may detect for himself the corrections and changes made for the printed text.

[1] "*Marmion* was first printed in a splendid quarto, price one guinea and a half. The 2000 copies of this edition were all disposed of in less than a month, when a second of 3000 copies, in 8vo, was sent to press. There followed a third and a fourth edition, each of 3000, in 1809; a fifth of 2000, early in 1810; and a sixth of 3000, in two volumes, crown 8vo, with twelve designs by Singleton, before the end of that year; a seventh of 4000, and an eighth of 5000 copies 8vo, in 1811; a ninth of 3000, in 1815; a tenth of 500, in 1820; an eleventh of 500, and a twelfth of 2000 copies, in foolscap, both in 1825. The legitimate sale in this country, therefore, down to the time of its being included in the first collective edition of his poetical works, amounted to 31,000, and the aggregate of that sale, down to the period at which I am writing (May 1836), may be stated at 50,000 copies . . . I anticipate no day when the student of English civilisation will pass without curiosity the contemporary reception of the Tale of Flodden Field." — LOCKHART'S *Life of Scott*

3)

~~Dele the~~ two last lines of the last stanza of copy last sent.

XXVIII

Still on the spot ~~F~~
~~His courser's pace~~ Lord Marmion staid
For fairer scene he never surveyed
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below
The wandering eye could over it go
And ~~The~~ mark ~~it~~ the distant ~~glow~~ city glow
With gloomy splendour red

For on the smoke-wreathes huge & slow
That round her sable towers ~~go~~ flow
The Sun his beams had shed
And tinged them with a lustre proud
Like that which streaks a Thunder cloud
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height —
Where the huge Castle holds its state

NOTES

Manuscript Variations

[The figures in heavy-faced type refer to the pages; those in plain type, to the lines of the text.]

Canto First

1 15–16

No longer now in glowing red,
The Ettericke-Forest hills are clad.

6 130–141

If genius high, and judgment sound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound,
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine,
Could save one mortal of the herd
From error — Fox had never err'd.

17 105–107

One bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
Two led his sumpter-mules along,
The third his palfrey, when at need.

Canto Second

40 125

And *youth shall* ply the sail and oar.

48 61–64

'Twas she that gave her ample dower
'Twas she, with carving rare and quaint,
Who deck'd the chapel of the saint.

65 486–488

A feeble and a flutter'd streak,
Like that with which the mornings break
In Autumn's sober sky.

Canto Third

79 202–207

While still with mimic hosts of shells,
Again my sport the combat tells —
Onward the Scottish Lion bore,
The scatter'd Southron fled before.

96 354–355 There floated Haco's banner grim,
O'er fierce of heart, and large of limb.

Canto Fourth

113 208–209 Such nights we've had; and though *our* game
Advance of years may something tame.

134 516–519 But, oh, far different change has been,
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford-hill, upon the scene
Of Scotland's war look'd down.

138 598–599 'Tis better sitting still at rest,
Than rising but to fall:
And while these words they did exchange,
They reach'd the camp's extremest range.

Canto Fifth

165 392–395 And, when his blood and heart were high,
King James's minions led to die,
On Lauder's dreary flat.

168 470 A maid to see her *love* depart.

Canto Sixth

238 1033–1036 Ever the stubborn spears made good
Their dark impenetrable wood;
Each Scot stepp'd where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell,

242 1152–1153 He hardest press'd the Scottish ring;
'Twas thought that he struck down the King.

II. VERSIFICATION

The prevailing metre is iambic four-stress (tetrameter) rhyming verse, or, as the older prosodists described it, octosyllabic couplets — the "lusty octosyllabics" of Lowell's description.

Though this kind of verse had been used for narrative verse in England since the Norman Conquest — it was a favorite measure with the *trouvères* — and all the masters wrote it with distinction (Chaucer in *The House of Fame*, Gower in the *Confessio Amantis*, Barbour in *The Bruce*, Shakespeare in the Chorus work of *Pericles*, Milton in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, Burns in *Tam o' Shanter*), it was a happy accident that determined Scott's use of it. He began to write his first metrical romance, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in ballad stanzas, but hearing a friend read Coleridge's *Christabel* from the unpublished manuscript, his ear detected that this kind of verse would be a more fitting vehicle for his poem, and from that time onward rhymed iambic tetrameter was his passion. Like the other masters of iambic tetrameter, Scott varies the expression by introducing trochaic and anapæstic effects. The force and energy of Scott's verse determined Byron to use iambic tetrameter in his metrical tales, *Mazeppa*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *The Giaour*, etc., the first of his poems to make a genuine popular appeal.

The frequent introduction of ballad measures in Scott's poems is very characteristic. Metre, rhyme, spirit, and quaintness of language and sentiment are used with admirable effect, and the variation thus afforded gives a pleasing break to the monotony of the rhyming couplets. The regular ballad metre is not always followed and the use of obsolete and strange fancy adds a weird tone to the songs. The following may be noticed:

1. In I, xiii, we have the fragment of a ballad of anapæstic metre, which consists of dimeters or tetrameters, each foot being an anapæst, a dactyl, an iamb, or a trochee.

2. In Constance's song in III, x, xi, the prevailing feet are dactyls which are varied in three different ways:

a. By having the second line in each couplet deficient of the final syllable (catalectic).

b. By the occasional introduction of an extra syllable (hypermetric) preceding the first dactyl (see xi, 10).

c. By an anticipation of the rhyme in two cases, which in effect throws the final syllable of the first line into the second line of the couplet (see xi, 5).

3. In Lady Heron's song, Lochinvar, V, xii, we have anapæstic metre with splendid amphibrachic variants. Browning revelled in this metre and used it in *How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix.*

III. EXPLANATORY AND ILLUSTRATIVE

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST

[The figures in heavy type refer to lines]

William Stewart Rose, Esq.: a Scottish poet, and a friend of Sir Walter Scott's. He translated the old French romances of *Amadis de Gaul* and *Parténopex de Blois*, to which Scott refers at the close of this Introduction; but his literary reputation now rests mainly on his excellent translation of the *Orlando Furioso*, by the Italian poet, Ariosto.

Ashestiel: the name of Scott's residence on the bank of the Tweed (see map). He lived there in 1806, when he began *Marmion*, which he published two years later. In 1812 he removed to the beautiful estate at Abbotsford, some five or six miles down the river.

14. Tweed: this river, which rises in Peeblesshire, drains almost the whole of the east portion of the Scottish lowlands. In this description of Ashestiel, and the brook which runs through it, we have one of the finest specimens of Scott's descriptive poetry.

30. Glenkinnon: the word *glen*, signifying 'valley,' forms the first syllable of the names of many towns, parishes, and valleys in Scotland and Ireland.

37. imps: children or offspring.

39. influence: "Whenever the word *influence* occurs in our English poetry, down to a comparatively modern date, there is always more or less remote allusion to the skyey or planetary influence supposed to be exercised by the heavenly bodies on men." — TRENCH

61. mind . . . weal: William Pitt, the second son of the Earl of Chatham, was born in 1759, became prime minister in 1784, effected a commercial treaty with France in 1786, and the union with Ireland in 1800. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

62. hand . . . steel: Horatio Nelson (1758–1805) distinguished himself in the sieges of Bastia and Calvi, in Corsica, at the battle of Copenhagen in 1801, at Trafalgar in 1805, where the victory cost him his life. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

72. Gadite: from *Gades*, the ancient name of Cadiz, where Nelson died.

73. levin: lightning. Cf. Spenser:

> As when the flashing *levin* haps to shine
> Upon two stubborn oaks.

104. tottering throne: this is an allusion to the insanity of George III.

111. Palinure: Palinurus was the pilot of the ship of Æneas. He fell into the sea and was murdered by the natives of the coast. From his name was derived Palinurum (now Cape Palinuro), a promontory on the western coast of Lucania.

127. rival. Charles James Fox (1749–1806), a long and determined opponent of Pitt, entered Parliament at the age of 19, and held office under Lord North. He opposed coercive measures during the American war, and was in favor of separation. Burke called him "the greatest debater the world ever saw," and Sir James Mackintosh, "the most Demosthenian speaker since Demosthenes." He was buried in Westminster Abbey, so near the tomb of Pitt as to suggest to Sir Walter Scott the well-known couplet (186–187):

> Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
> 'Twill trickle to his rival's bier.

154. Europe crouched. The Austrians and Russians were defeated by the French at Austerlitz in 1805. An alliance, from which Prussia held aloof, was formed between England, Austria, Russia, and Sweden.

157. timorous slave: Haugwitz, the minister of the king of Prussia, who waited to see whether the Austrians and Russians would resist the French.

203. In 1801, when the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was published, Pitt and Fox were alive.

259. Morgana: Morgan le Fay, daughter of Queen Igrayne, and half sister of King Arthur, who revealed to him the intrigues of Sir Launcelot and Guinever. She gave him a cup containing a magic draught, and

Arthur had no sooner drunk it than his eyes were opened to the perfidy of his wife and friend.

263. Ganore: Guinever, King Arthur's queen.

268. Sangreal: the vessel from which, according to legend, Christ drank at the Last Supper, and which was afterwards filled by Joseph of Arimathea with the blood which flowed from his wounds.

273. Spenser's . . . dream: the *Faerie Queene.*

274. Milton's . . . theme: *Paradise Lost.*

312. Ytene: an old Saxon name for the New Forest.

314. Sir Bevis of Hampton was the hero of one of the old romances. He is said to have been a Christian champion against the Danes in the time of King Edgar. The giant, Ascapart, was an associate of Sir Bevis.

CANTO FIRST

4. donjon: the *donjon* contained the strongest part of the castle, hence "dungeon."

43. Malvoisie or Malmsey: a wine so called from Napoli di Malvasia, on the east side of the Morea, where it is produced.

65. Bosworth field. In this battle in Leicestershire, which was fought August 22, 1485, Richard III was defeated and killed by Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who was immediately proclaimed king under the title of Henry VII. The scar would thus have now been twenty-eight years old.

75. carpet knight: a knight not dubbed on the field of battle, or one too effeminate to fight. Cf. *Lady of the Lake*, Canto V, stanza 14, and Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, III, iv.

106. sumpter-mules: mules having pack-saddles and carrying loads.

134. linstock: a wooden fork, to hold a lighted match, for firing cannon. — **yare:** ready.

139. morrice-pikes: Moorish pikes. Cf. "morrice-dancers," *Lady of the Lake*, Canto V, stanza 20.

146. angels: the "angel" was an English coin bearing the stamp of an angel. Its value varied at different times, but it was somewhere about ten shillings.

156. Marmion. "Lord Marmion, the principal character of the present romance, is entirely a fictitious personage. In earlier times indeed, the family of Marmion, Lords of Fontenay, in Normandy, was highly distinguished. Robert de Marmion, Lord of Fontenay, a dis-

tinguished follower of the Conqueror, obtained a grant of the castle and town of Tamworth, and also of the manor of Scrivelby in Lincolnshire. . . . But after the castle and demesne of Tamworth had passed through four successive barons from Robert, the family became extinct in the person of Philip de Marmion, who died in 20th Edward I. without issue male. He was succeeded in his castle of Tamworth by Alexander de Freville, who . . . claimed the office of royal champion. . . . But this office was adjudged to Sir John Dymoke, to whom the manor of Scrivelby had descended by another of the co-heiresses of Robert de Marmion; and it remains in that family, whose representative is Hereditary Champion of England at the present day. . . . I have not, therefore, created a new family, but only revived the titles of an old one in an imaginary personage." — SCOTT.

157. Fontenaye: a town in Normandy, now in the department of Vendée.

158. Lutterward: Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. The parish church contains the pulpit in which Wickliffe addressed his congregation. — **Scrivelbaye:** or Scrivelby, in Lincolnshire.

159. Tamworth: on the Tame, in Staffordshire and partly in Warwickshire.

174. Cottiswold: the Cotswold Hills in Gloucester. The termination *wold* means 'a plain.' Cf. Tennyson, *To J. S.*

> The wind, that beats the mountain, blows
> More softly round the open *wold*.

185. The vanquished combatant was degraded by having his shield fastened upside down on a gibbet.

192. Sir Hugh the Heron: this person was William Heron of Ford, not Hugh. He was husband to the famous Lady Ford, whose charms are said to have cost James IV so dear.

201. Scott remarks: "This old Northumbrian ballad was taken down from the recitation of a woman eighty years of age, mother of one of the miners of Alstonmoor, by an agent for the lead mines there, who communicated it to my friend and correspondent, R. Surtees Esquire, of Mainsforth." A hoax seems to have been played on the author of *Marmion*. The success of the deception was owing to the fact that the events mentioned in the ballad are supported by historical and contemporary evidence.

206. Deadman's-shaw. "Another reading is 'Deadmanshaugh.' *Haugh*, according to Ogilvy, is a Scotch word connected with German *hag*, an enclosed meadow, and means low-lying ground, property on the border of a river, and such as is sometimes overflowed."

231. wassail-bowl: a large bowl out of which the Saxons used to pledge one another at their feasts.

264. Lindisfarne: an isle on the coast of Northumberland, which was called Holy Island, because of its ancient monastery, which was the episcopal seat of the see of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity.

298. Warbeck: Perkin Warbeck, who pretended to be Richard, Duke of York.

389. Palmer: a pilgrim to the Holy Land was privileged to carry a palm staff. A Palmer was not like a pilgrim who could return to private life. He must spend his days in visiting holy shrines.

402. The "cockle-shell" was sacred to James, the patron saint of Spain.

407. Saint Rosalie: a maid of Palermo, in Sicily. She lived in an almost inaccessible grotto.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND

Rev. John Marriot, A. M.: Mr. Marriot, who died while a young man, in 1808, was tutor to George Henry, Lord Scott; he wrote several ballads, which Scott published in *Border Minstrelsy*.

32. Newark's . . . tower: at one time a royal castle on the Yarrow.

41. gazehounds: hounds which pursue game by sight.

42. bratchet: a slow hound which pursues by scent.

54. Ettrick: James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd," was born in this parish in 1770.

73. Bowhill: on the delta formed by the confluence of the Ettrick and Yarrow rivers.

83. Carterhaugh: the scene of the ballad.

84. Baron: George Henry, Lord Scott, son of Charles, Earl of Dalkeith, is referred to here. Lord Montagu (to whom *Marmion* was inscribed) was his uncle.

90. Sylphid Queen: Queen of the fairies. *Sylphs*, according to the belief of the Middle Ages, were the elemental spirits of the air.

102. Yair: on the Tweed, a short distance below Ashestiel.

147. This line was suggested by the same beautiful sheet of water which, according to Scott, drew from Wordsworth the lines:

> The swan on sweet St. Mary's lake
> Floats double, swan and shadow.

189. Bourhope: a hill on the south side of the lake.

195. Dryhope's . . . tower: a castle at the eastern end of St. Mary's Lake, supposed to have been the birthplace of Mary Scott, the "Flower of Yarrow," who was buried in the adjoining cemetery.

202. Wizard's grave: a grave where tradition places the remains of a priest who had dealings with the Evil One.

CANTO SECOND

9. Whitby: "The Abbey of Whitby . . . on the coast of Yorkshire, was founded A.D. 657, in consequence of a vow of Oswy, King of Northumberland. It contained both monks and nuns of the Benedictine order; but contrary to what was usual in such establishments, the abbess was superior to the abbot." — SCOTT

20. Saint Hilda: a Northumbrian lady of rank of whom little is known except that she founded this abbey.

33. sea-dog: the dogfish, or a kind of seal.

83. chapter: a meeting of heads (*capita*) of houses. A court was about to be held, at which the heads of three religious houses belonging to the order of St. Benedict were to hold a trial on the two apostates. The chief ecclesiastics who are attached to a cathedral are called a *chapter*.

91. one: De Wilton.

94. one: Marmion.

103. The reference is to Una, the virgin who tamed the lion, mentioned in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Canto III, 5.

143. Warkworth: situated at the mouth of the Coquet. Here Shakespeare laid the scene of part of *Henry IV*. — **Percy:** the ballad here alluded to, *The Hermit of Warkworth*, was published in 1771 by Thomas Bishop of Dromore (1728–1811).

244. Edelfled: the daughter of King Osway, who defeated the pagan ruler of Mercia and dedicated her to God.

256. resting-place: the body of St. Cuthbert is said to have been brought from the Farne Island to Landisfarne, then to Whithorn, to Norham, to Melrose, and to Tilmouth. Afterwards it was taken to Yorkshire and finally to Wardilaw.

289. Galwegians: men of Galloway.

350. cresset: from the French *creuset*, a small lamp.

371. "As in the case of Whitby and Holy Island, the introduction of nuns at Tynemouth, in the reign of Henry VIII, is an anachronism." — SCOTT

398. Fontevraud: a town in France, famous for its abbey which was at the head of a peculiar order — the men being subject to the women.

450. "It is well known that the religious who broke their vows of chastity were subjected to the same penalty as the Roman vestals in a similar case. A small niche sufficient to enclose their bodies was made in the massive wall of the convent; a slender pittance of food and water was deposited in it, and the awful words, *Vade in Pace*, were the signal for immuring the criminal. It is not unlikely that in latter times this punishment was often resorted to; but, among the ruins of the Abbey of Coldingham were some years ago discovered the remains of a female skeleton, which, from the shape of the niche and position of the figure, seemed to be that of an immured nun." — SCOTT

570. Rome: pronounced *room*, which seems to have been the old pronunciation. Cf. Shakespeare:

> Now is it Rome indeed, and room *enough*.
>
> *Julius Cæsar*, I, ii, 156

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD

William Erskine, Esq.: Erskine was an eminent Scottish lawyer and judge, and one of Sir Walter's most intimate friends.

51. Austria: Napoleon won a victory over the combined Austrian and Russian forces at Austerlitz in 1805. The next year Austria refused to assist Prussia.

54. Brandenburg: the Royal House of Prussia.

59. dragon: Napoleon Bonaparte is meant here.

70. By the treaty of Tilsit (1807) Prussia ceded certain provinces to Napoleon.

81. Red-Cross hero: Admiral Sir Sidney Smith received the cross of the Swedish Order of the Sword for the services given to Sweden against Russia.

90. polar lake: Gulf of Finland.

94. father of the fight: Sir Ralph Abercromby, who defeated the French in 1801 and was mortally wounded in the contest.

108. Montfort: *De Montfort* and *Basil* are two of Baillie's *Plays on the Passions.*

129. Belgian: Belgium was not separately organized until 1830. The term is used in a general sense for an inhabitant of the Low Countries.

172. infant: Scott is referring to himself here.

178. shattered tower: "Smailholm Tower, in Berwickshire, the scene of the author's infancy, is situated about two miles from Dryburgh Abbey."

197. Wallace: Sir William Wallace gallantly maintained the independence of Scotland against Edward I until, betrayed by his own countryman, he came into the hands of his opponent by whom he was executed in 1305.—**Bruce:** the hero of Bannockburn, in 1314. Notice the alliteration in this line.

202. An allusion to the youth of Scott.

207. Southron: the English. In 1544 the English were defeated by the Scotch, after numerous ravages on the borders of Scotland.

211. Robert Scott of Sandy-Knowe, the poet's grandfather, is referred to here.

CANTO THIRD

31. bush: it was formerly the custom to hang out a bush or branch as a tavern sign. Cf. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*:

> Good wine needs no *bush.*

48. solands: aquatic fowl, about the size of the goose, found on the Scotch coast.

49. gammons: the legs or thighs of hogs pickled and smoked or dried.

117. Constant: Constance de Beverley, who had followed Marmion disguised as a page.

120. Valentine: it used to be a popular belief that thrushes selected their mates on the fourteenth of February.

199. Lutterward . . . Fontenaye: the heralds, in Canto I, hailed Marmion as lord of these places (the former in Leicestershire, the latter in Normandy).

211. death-peal: among the Scotch peasants a tinkling in the ears, the "dead-bell," was regarded as the sign of the death of a friend.

324. clerk: since in ancient times the clergyman was about the only person who could read and write, the word *clerical*, for example "clerical error," came to mean an error in spelling. As the respondent in church was able to read, he was styled the *clerk*.

325. Alexander: Alexander III (1241–1285).

328. Sir Hugo: Sir Hugh Gifford de Yester lived in the thirteenth century and was reputed to be a great magician.

333. Goblin-Hall: a subterranean cave in the castle of Gifford, supposed to have been constructed by magical art.

354. Haco: "In 1263, Haco, King of Norway, came into the Firth of Clyde with a powerful armament and made a descent at Largs in Ayrshire. Here he was encountered and defeated on the 2nd October, by Alexander III. Haco retreated to Orkney, where he died soon after this disgrace to his arms. There are still existing, near the place of battle, many barrows, some of which, having been opened, were found, as usual, to contain bones and urns." — Scott

369. pentacle: a piece of fine linen folded with *five* corners, representing the five senses, and suitably inscribed with magical characters. According to some it represents the five wounds of Christ.

407. "It is a popular article of faith that those who are born on Christmas day or Good Friday have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them. The Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Philip II to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him." — Scott

453. England's king: here we have another anachronism, since Edward I, the monarch referred to here, did not ascend the throne of England till 1272. The battle of Largs was fought in 1263, and Edward did not set out for Palestine until 1269.

472. Largs: "Largs is in Ayrshire, on the eastern bank of the estuary of the Clyde. In 1263 Haco, King of Norway, invaded Scotland with a

powerful fleet. After taking the islands of Arran and Bute he disembarked his forces at Largs to give battle to the Scots, who were assembled there under their king, Alexander III. Owing to a storm, he was only able to land a part of his troops; he therefore suffered a decisive defeat (1263)." — MORRIS

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH

James Skene, Esq.: Skene was in the Royal Edinburgh Light Horse Volunteers, of which Scott was quartermaster, — that office having been selected for Scott to spare him the rough usage of the ranks because of his lameness.

1. Minstrel: Shakespeare.

3–4. clown . . . Jaques: characters in *As You Like It.*

132. Forbes: Sir William Forbes, author of a *Life of Beattie.*

174. Pandour and Camp: dogs owned by Scott, the latter a bull-terrier which was a favorite with the poet.

191. Colin Mackenzie, Esq., of Portmore, one of the Principal Clerks of the Session of Edinburgh, and through life an intimate friend of the poet.

194. R—: Sir William Rae of St. Catharine's, Bart., subsequently Lord Advocate of Scotland, was a distinguished member of the volunteer corps to which Sir Walter Scott belonged. Scott, Skene, Mackenzie, and a few other friends, had formed themselves into a little semi-military club, the meetings of which were held at their family supper tables in rotation.

CANTO FOURTH

31. Friar Rush: Scott gives the alias "Will o' the wisp." Knightly considers that Friar Rush haunts houses and not fields. Milton in *L'Allegro* makes a like mistake.

90. antique dome: Westminster Abbey, where was set up the first printing press.

91. de Worde: Wynken de Worde, the first printer to use the Roman letter, was instructed by William Caxton, who lived in 1422–1491.

135. cap of maintenance: the cap of dignity worn by persons of distinction. It was made of crimson velvet lined with ermine.

142. Achaius: King of Scotland (787–810), who is said to have instituted the order of the Thistle.

153. Sir David Lindesay: an early Scottish poet (1490–1555) who became king-at-arms in 1530, or several years after the events mentioned here.

232. Massy More: a corruption of the Moorish word *mazmorra*, 'a dungeon.'

254. Bothwell: James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, husband of Mary, and murderer of Darnley.

357. marshal: John Inglis, named in Pitscottie's account of the apparition.

490. Dun-Edin: Edinburgh, the "hill fortress of Edwyn," a king of Northumbria.

508. Saint Giles: the cathedral.

557. Cannon cast by one named Borthwick.

578. ramped: heraldic term. A beast of prey is *rampant* when depicted standing up on its hind legs.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH

George Ellis, Esq.: Ellis was an English scholar and writer (1753–1815), with whom Scott was accustomed to stay on his visits to London. "Mr. Ellis was the finest converser I ever knew," said Scott. "His patience and good breeding made me often ashamed of myself going off at score (that is, starting off suddenly) upon some favorite topic."

1. glooms: for a similar transitive force cf. Goldsmith, *Deserted Village*: "What sorrows *gloomed* that parting day."

30. Forest: Ettrick Forest. See Introduction to Canto Second.

37. Caledonia's Queen: Edinburgh, where this Introduction was written. "The Old Town of Edinburgh was secured on the north by a lake, now drained, and on the south by a wall, which there was some attempt to make defensible, even so late as 1745. The gates and the greater part of the wall have been pulled down in the course of the late extensive and beautiful enlargement of the city. My ingenious and valued friend, Mr. Thomas Campbell, proposed to celebrate Edinburgh under the epithet here borrowed. But the "Queen of the North" has not been so fortunate as to receive from so eminent a pen the proposed distinction." — Scott

67. Malbecco: a "cankered, crabbed earl," very wealthy, but miserly and mean.

72. aventayle: the movable front part of a helmet, intended for the admission of air.

84. Satyrane: a knight who delivered Una from the fauns and satyrs. The meaning is that Truth being driven from the towns and cities took refuge in caves and dens, where for a time it lay concealed. At length Sir Satyrane (Luther) rescues Una from bondage, but no sooner is this the case than she falls in with Archimago, to show how very difficult it was at the Reformation to separate Truth from Error. See Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book I.

85. Paridell: a male coquette whose delight was to win women's hearts and then desert them. See Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book III.

88. Britomart: daughter of king Ryence of Wales, the impersonation of saintly chastity and purity of mind.

106. knosp: an unopened bud; therefore, in architecture, an ornament resembling a bud.

117. York: Edward IV of England, a descendant of Edmund, Duke of York, son of Edward III.

118. Henry: Henry VI of England, after his defeat at Towton by Edward of York in 1461, found refuge in Edinburgh.

120. Bourbon: Charles X of France.

132. invading men: the French.

139. whilere: formerly.

140. Henry: Henry I, called Beauclerc on account of his scholarship.

146. Marie: Marie translated twelve curious lays from the Armorican, the language of Brittany, into Norman-French. — **Blondel:** the famous minstrel of Richard I.

154. George Ellis "translated all the playful fascinations of a humour, as delightful as it was uncommon, into the forgotten poetry of the ancient minstrels, and gave life and popularity to compositions which had till then been buried in the closet of the antiquary." — Scott

CANTO FIFTH

18. cloth-yard arrows: arrows a yard long. "This is no poetical exaggeration. In some of the counties of England, distinguished for archery, shafts of this extraordinary length were actually used. Thus

at the battle of Blackheath, between the troops of Henry VII and the Cornish insurgents, in 1496, the bridge of Dartwood was defended by a picked band of archers from the rebel army, 'whose arrows,' says Hollinshed, 'were in length a full cloth yard.'" — SCOTT

36. "The Scottish burgesses were, like yeomen, appointed to be armed with bows and sheaves, sword, buckler, knife, spear, or a good axe instead of a bow, if worth £100; their armour to be of white or bright harness. They wore *white hats*, i.e., bright steel caps, without crest or visor. By an act of James IV their *weapon-schawings* are appointed to be held four times a year, under the aldermen or bailiffs." — SCOTT

50. "When the feudal array of the kingdom was called forth, each man was obliged to appear with forty days' provision. When this was expended, which took place before the battle of Flodden, the army melted away of course. Almost all the Scottish forces, except a few knights, men-at-arms, and the Border-prickers, who formed excellent light-cavalry, acted upon foot." — SCOTT

68. Borderer: the frontier of England and Scotland from the eleventh to the fifteenth century was the field of constant forays. In Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* the feuds and forays of clans and families are commemorated in a series of ballads.

75. pricker: one who "pricks" with spurs, a horseman. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, I, i, 1:

> A gentle knight was *pricking* on the plaine.

107. trews: short trousers.

124. targe: a shield. The "targe" of the Highlanders was round in shape and made of light wood, covered with leather, and studded with brass or iron.

221. baldric: a warrior's belt.

247. "Few readers need to be reminded of this belt, to the weight of which James added certain ounces every year that he lived. The person and character of James are delineated according to our best historians. His romantic disposition, which led him highly to relish gaiety, approaching to license, was, at the same time, tinged with enthusiastic devotion. These propensities sometimes formed a strange contrast." — SCOTT

261. King James's acquaintance with Lady Heron of Ford did not commence until he marched into England. Our historians impute to the

King's infatuated passion the delays which led to the fatal defeat of Flodden. . . . That she came and went between the armies of James and Surrey is certain." — SCOTT

270. Scott quotes from Pitscottie's *History*: "Also the Queen of France wrote a love letter to the King of Scotland, calling him her love, showing him that she had suffered much rebuke in France for the defending of his honour. She believed that he would raise her an army, and come three feet of ground on English ground, for her sake. To that effect she sent him a ring off her finger, with fourteen thousand French crowns to pay his expenses."

286. Margaret: daughter of Henry VII of England.

313. Lochinvar: "The Gordons were Lords of Lochinvar, a castle by a lake of the same name . . . beyond the borders of Dumfries. The Grahams were Lords of Netherby Hall, near Carlisle, in Cumberland." — MORRIS

353. scaur: "A bare place on the side of a steep hill, from which the sward has been washed down by rains." — JAMIESON

388. Douglas: Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, "now an old man, was strongly opposed to the Flodden war, whereupon the King insultingly told him he might go home if he was afraid." — MORRIS

395. Lauder: a small town on the river Leader, a tributary of the Tweed.

402. Bothwell: Bothwell Castle, on the Clyde.

462. Douglas: Lord James of Douglas, son of Sir William of Douglas, was Bruce's greatest captain in the long War of the Succession. He was slain in Andalusia, in 1330, on his way to the Holy Land with the heart of his royal master.

558. Giles's: the Church of St. Giles.

587. Martin Swart: "German general, who commanded the auxiliaries sent by the Duchess of Burgundy with Lambert Simnel. He was defeated and killed at Stokefield. The name of this German general is preserved by that of the field of battle, which is called, after him, Swartmoor. There were songs about him long current in England." — SCOTT

610. "It was early necessary for those who felt themselves obliged to believe in the divine judgment being enunciated in the trial by duel, to find salvos for the strange and obviously precarious chances of the combat. Various curious evasive shifts, used by those who took up an

unrighteous quarrel, were supposed sufficient to convert it into a just one." — SCOTT

704. Withold: the saint popularly invoked against nightmare.

705. City Cross: "The cross of Edinburgh was an ancient and curious structure. The lower part was an octagonal tower, sixteen feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet high. At each angle there was a pillar, and between them an arch, of the Grecian shape. Above these was a projecting battlement, with a turret at each corner, and medallions, of rude but curious workmanship, between them. Above this rose the proper cross, a column of one stone upwards of twenty feet high, surmounted with a unicorn. . . . From the tower of the cross, so long as it remained, the heralds published the Acts of Parliament; and its site, marked by radii diverging from a stone center, in the High Street, is still the place where proclamations are made." — SCOTT

735. "This supernatural citation is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was, probably, like the apparition at Linlithgow, an attempt, by those averse to the war, to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV." — SCOTT

840. Bass: a small island at the mouth of the Firth of Forth. It is noted for the resistance a few followers of James II made at the revolution of 1688. It is a great resort of solan geese. Cf. III, iii, 49.

913. one: "This relates to the catastrophe of a real Robert de Marmion, in the reign of King Stephen, whom William of Newbury describes with some attributes of my fictitious hero." — SCOTT

1001. Wark: "As a border castle, was often besieged by the Scots. Edward III defended it against them. It stood on the south banks of the river Tweed, east of Teviotdale, not far from Kelso. At the Union the castle was demolished." — MORRIS

1017. Millfield Plain: here the Scots under Lord Home were defeated, principally through an ambuscade, shortly before the battle of Flodden.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH

Richard Heber, Esq.: a half-brother of Bishop Heber, the poet, was one of Scott's most intimate friends. He was a member of Parliament, 1821–1826, but was noted chiefly as a classical scholar and book-

collector. He spent about $900,000 in this way, and owned a number of large libraries in London, Paris, Oxford, and elsewhere.

7. Iol: Scott says that the Iol of the heathen Danes (a word preserved in the English Yule, and still applied to Christmas in Scotland) was solemnized with great festivity. At table, on that occasion, the feasters amused themselves by pelting each other with bones. In their dances round great fires of pine trees, they danced with such fury, holding each other by the hands, that if the grasp of anyone failed, he was pitched into the fire with the velocity of a sling. The sufferer was instantly plucked out and compelled to drink a huge measure of ale as a penalty "for spoiling the king's fire."

44. underogating: without sacrificing dignity. Scott shows in many of his writings a disposition to attach undue importance to rank and position.

53. day to grace: Christmas.

55. mark: in feudal times, as all people of rank dined at the same table, a large saltcellar was placed in the middle to "mark" the line of separation between the superior and inferior ranks. Persons of distinction sat *above* the "saler."

75. mystery: the English "mummers" and the Scottish "guisards" present some traces of the old mysteries which were the origin of the English drama. These were at first representations of Bible stories, and afterwards virtues and vices (moralities) personified. The church favored them.

131. Noll Bluff: Captain Noll Bluff is a character in Congreve's comedy *The Old Bachelor*. The saying alluded to is "Hannibal was a very pretty fellow . . . a very pretty fellow in those days."

143. Leyden: John Leyden, M.D., the poet and Orientalist, had been of great service to Scott in the preparation of the *Border Minstrelsy*. At this time he was in India.

150. *locutus Bos:* Latin for "an ox spoke." Such portents are chronicled by Livy.

158. Glendowerdy: Owen Glendower, a Welsh chief, who with Hotspur and Douglas attempted to dethrone Henry IV.

159. 'The Spirit's Blasted Tree': the title of a legendary tale by George Warrington.

161. Maida's shore: Maida is a small town of southern Italy.

205. Pitscottie: Robert Lindsay, of Pitscottie, a Scottish chronicler of the sixteenth century.

212. Fordun: John, of Fordun, a Scottish chronicler, author of *Gifford's Goblin Cave*, who lived about 1380.

CANTO SIXTH

36. cognizance: badge. The cognizance of the Douglas family was the "bleeding heart." Robert Bruce on his deathbed bequeathed his heart to his close friend, the good Lord James, to be borne in war against the Saracens.

110. very form: it was believed that at a certain season of the year, the form of St. Hilda could be seen on one of the windows of Whitby Abbey.

150. limner: painter. The mode of describing this unexpected meeting of Clare and DeWilton is particularly fine.

327. A bishop: Gawain Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld and son of Earl of Angus, known as Bell-the-Cat. He translated into the Scotch dialect Virgil's *Æneid* and wrote other poems of merit. As he was not then a bishop we have here another anachronism.

329. rochet: or *rocquet*, a short surplice worn by bishops.

344. Angus is said to have cut off at one blow, in single combat, the leg of Spens, of Kilspindie, a favorite of James IV.

428. The language of Marmion is that of one who feels his own guilt.

435. Saint Bride: there seem to have been two saints of this name, one Irish and the other Scotch. The Scotch was a favorite of the Douglas family, and had a shrine at their castle of Bothwell on the Clyde.

456. A letter forged: "Lest the reader should partake of the earl's astonishment, and consider the crime as inconsistent with the manners of the period, I have to remind him of the numerous forgeries (partly executed by a female assistant) devised by Robert of Artois, to forward his suit against the Countess Matilda; which being detected, occasioned his flight into England, and proved the remote cause of Edward the Third's memorable wars in France." — SCOTT

610. Randolph: "Sir Thomas Randolph, sister's son to King Robert Bruce, and created by him Earl of Murray; after a short alienation at first, one of Bruce's best supporters."

616. Bannockbourne: here, in 1314, Bruce, with 30,000, defeated an army of 100,000 English, under Edward II.

681. "The spot from which Clara views the battle must be supposed to have been on a hillock commanding the rear of the English right wing, which was defeated, and in which conflict Marmion is supposed to have fallen." — SCOTT

717. Brian Tunstall: "Sir Brian Tunstall, called in the romantic language of the time, Tunstall the Undefiled, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden." — SCOTT

881. Dacre: he commanded the reserve.

1046. Scott is fond of this figurative style.

1080. "There can be no doubt that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed, says the curious French Gazette, within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey; and the same account adds, that none of his division were made prisoners, though many were killed." — SCOTT

1090. pile: the cathedral near "Tamworth tower and town," said in Canto First to belong to Marmion.

1111. 'wede away': weeded away. The allusion is to the poem *The Flowers of the Forest*, given by Scott in his *Border Minstrelsy* and supposed to have been written by Jane Elliott.

1155. Holinshed or Hall: English chroniclers, who lived about half a century after Flodden.

1168. Sands: Sir William Sands, or Sandys, created Lord Sands, Chamberlain of Henry VIII. — **Denny:** Sir Anthony Denny, one of the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, to Henry VIII.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS, READERS, AND STUDENTS

I. ON THE STUDY OF POETRY GENERALLY

The keynote of the old Puritan Catechism voices a vital principle in the interpretation of poetry. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

The object of all great poetry is to make glorious the subject it deals with and to afford enjoyment to the reader. It is not to give information or to convey historical fact, but by vivid presentation and emotional appeal so to deal with its subject matter as to make it a thing of passionate interest and living reality. This must never be forgotten in the study of such a poem as *Marmion*.

II. ON READING ALOUD

Poetry, by virtue of its emotional qualities, demands to be read aloud, and can only be realized in its full beauty and truth when interpreted in this way. That poetry gains by being read aloud may seem to many obvious enough, but this plain simple truth is in serious danger of being forgotten, and its significance wholly ignored when we go into our libraries and begin to pore over *The Canterbury Tales* or *The Faerie Queene* in some variorum edition overlaid with the pedantries of generations of commentators. In such circumstances we too easily forget that all the world's great creative literature has been dedicated to the human voice, and that

it made its appeal primarily to the ear. Higher criticism and a study of the conditions in which the great literary works of bygone ages were given to the world, show that they were intended to be heard through being read aloud.

III. HOMERIC QUALITIES IN *MARMION*

Marmion has been called the most Homeric bit of narrative in the English language, and from beginning to end of the story we have illustrated all the characteristics of excellent epic verse. Here as Shairp says, "Whatever was epic in Scott found fullest bent. He chose a national and truly heroic action as the center or climax of the whole poem. It was a fine thought to describe the great battle, not from the thick of the mêlée, but as seen by Clara and the two pages from a vantage ground apart. This does not diminish one whit the animation of the scene, yet greatly enchances the totality and perfection of the picture. It is needless to quote lines which everyone who cares for such things knows by heart, but note the passage beginning with —

> At length the freshening western blast
> Aside the shroud of battle cast;

and the one following, which thus opens:

> Far on the left, unseen the while,
> Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;

ending with that so powerful incident—

> When, fast as shaft can fly,
> Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
> The loose rein dangling from his head,
> Housing and saddle bloody red,
> Lord Marmion's steed rushed by;

and last of all, the picture of the desperate ring that fought and died but did not yield, around their gallant king. To find any battle scenes that can match with these we must go back to those of the Iliad. As far as I know, the poetry of no land, in the interval between Homer and Scott, can show anything that can be placed by their side."

Andrew Lang's words, too, in this connection are rememberable: "Prose could never tell the tale of Flodden Fight in *Marmion*, which I verily believe is the best battle piece in all the poetry of all time, better even than the stand of Aias by the ships in the Iliad, better than the slaying of the wooers in the Odyssey."

IV. LYRICISM IN THE INTRODUCTIONS

Lyricism, as distinct from epic qualities in the main narrative, is the characteristic of the Introductions. They are written to Scott's personal friends from Ashestiel, the romantic old mansion that overhangs the Glenkinnon, hurrying through a deep ravine on its way to join the Tweed; behind the house is a circle of hills, beyond which lies all the glory of Ettrick and the mystery of Yarrow. These Introductions are surcharged with the riches of his personal affection.

Whittier's *Snowbound* shows how one American poet came under the influence of the winter descriptions in the last of these revelations of Scott's delight in landscape and sheer joy in the intimacies of fireside friendship.

V. GENERAL STUDIES

1. A student ought to be able to tell:

a. The subject matter of each canto.

b. How each canto advances the story of the poem.

c. What seems the most dramatic situation in each canto.

d. Whether Marmion, or any of the characters in the poem, recall traits or treatment of characters by other poets and novelists.

e. What seems to make the octosyllabic couplet (see Versification, pp. 250–251) so effective as the vehicle of a narrative poem.

f. What narrative poems in English literature, from Chaucer to Masefield, are in octosyllabic verse.

2. Discuss: "Scott's 'scenery' seldom exists for its own sake, but serves for background and setting of his story." Compare Scott's treatment of nature with Wordsworth's or Shelley's or that of later modern poets.

CANTO I

1. Why does Marmion stop at Norham Castle?

2. What is the general effect upon the reader of the picture of medieval pageantry?

3. What would lead you to believe that the Palmer is concealing his own identity?

CANTO II

How does Constance unfold the story of Marmion's history?

CANTO III

How is Marmion affected by the song of Fitz-Eustace?

CANTO IV

1. What is the significance of the halt at Crichtoun Castle?
2. How is the Elfin Knight introduced into the story?

CANTO V

1. Compare the description of King James in the poem with that given in *Tales of a Grandfather* (see Introduction).
2. Describe the quarrel between the King and Douglas.
3. Describe the parting of Douglas and Marmion.
4. What is the significance of the peasant at Marmion's death?

VI. QUESTIONS FROM THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD ON SCOTT'S *MARMION*

1. The passages below were written by certain of the following authors: Scott, Coleridge, Tennyson, Browning, and Matthew Arnold. Tell who you think wrote any *one* of these passages, and point out the qualities of style and substance upon which you base your opinion.

(*a*) And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while
Before a venerable pile
Whose turrets viewed afar
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.

At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable dame,
And prayed Saint Hilda's abbess rest
With her, a loved and honored guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the abbess, you may guess,
And thanked the Scottish prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that passed between.

(*b*) Wide open were the gates,
And no watch kept; and in through these he past,
And heard but his own steps and his own heart
Beating, for nothing moved but his own self
And his own shadow. Then he crossed the court,
And spied not any light in hall or bower,
But saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all
Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt
And overgrowing them, went on and found,
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow moon,
Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
Came lightening downward, and so split itself
Among the roses, and was lost again.

(*c*) While I am I, and you are you,
So long as the world contains us both,
Me the loving and you the loth,
While the one eludes, must the other pursue.
My life is a fault at last, I fear:
It seems too much like a fate, indeed!
Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.
But what if I fail of my purpose here?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
And, baffled, get up and begin again,—
So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.
While, look but once from your farthest bound
At me so deep in the dust and dark,
No sooner the old hope goes to ground
Than a new one, straight to the selfsame mark,
I shape me—
Ever
Removed!

2. In what poems of Tennyson, Browning, Scott, Coleridge, and Arnold that you have read is there significant use of lake, river, or sea?